



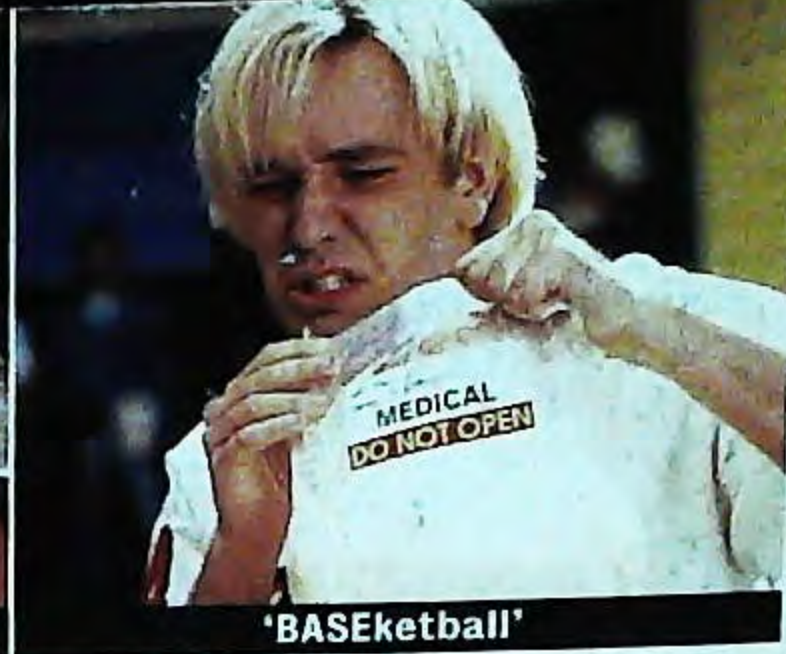
'Monty Python's The Meaning of Life'



'Dumb and Dumber'



'National Lampoon's Animal House'



'BASEketball'

#443 • July 31, 1998

# Entertainment WEEKLY

## BLEECH!

### 'There's Something About Mary' And The History Of



# GOOD MORNING

## MOVIES

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PLUS

### KATIE HOLMES in 'Disturbing Behavior' Bad Days at GOOD MORNING AMERICA



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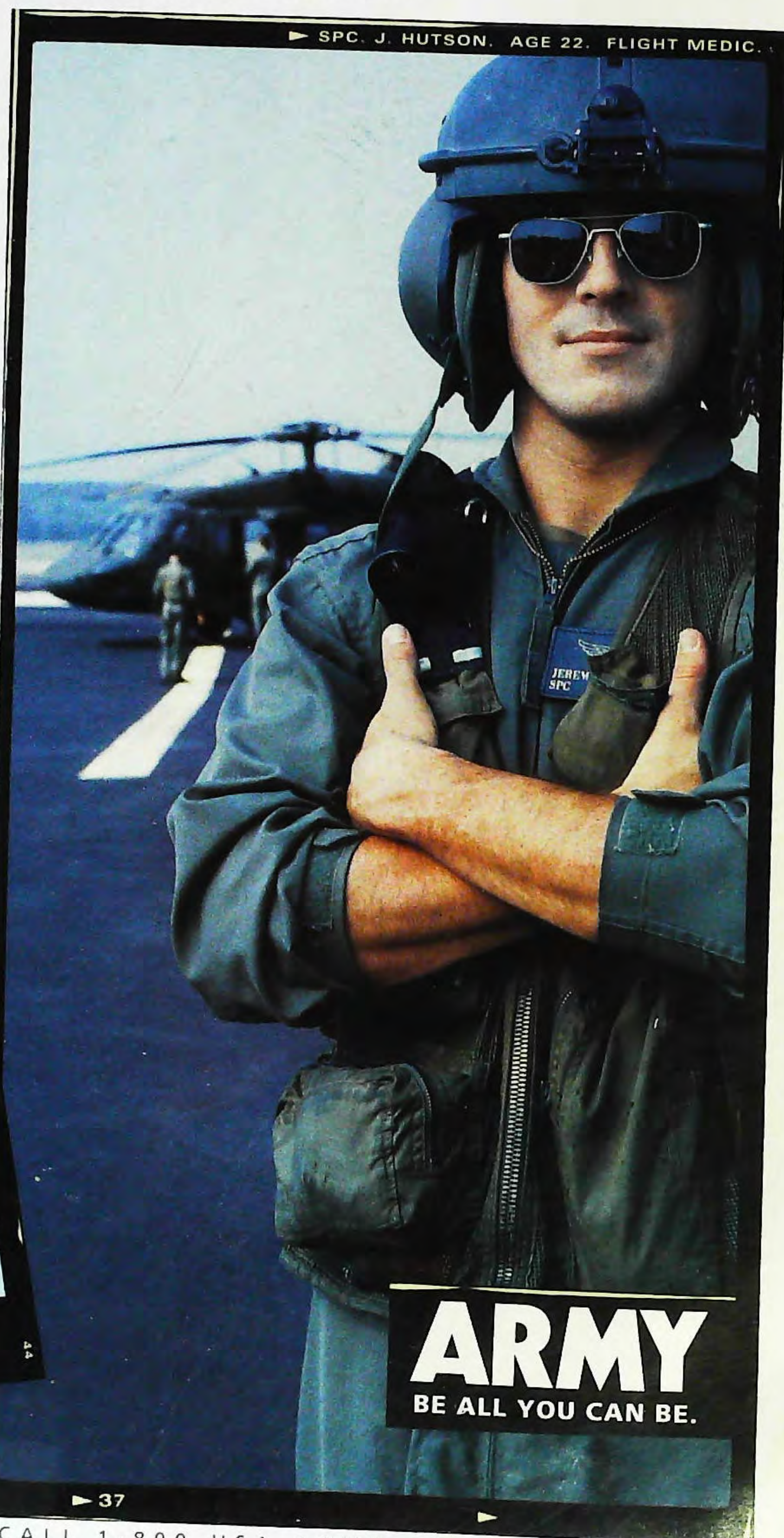
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**32 RED ALERT** Natasha Richardson enlivens a slinky *Cabaret* and the wholesome *Parent Trap*

## NEWS & NOTES

**8 Pair Shaped** From Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks to Diane Keaton and Warren Beatty, tried-and-true couples are reuniting on screen...*Scooby-Doo* howls his way to a comeback...*The Parent Trap* premieres in L.A....*Hot Sheet*...*Flashes*...*Monitor*.

### ON THE COVER

Photograph of  
Cameron Diaz in *There's Something About Mary*:  
Glenn Watson

### EW ON CNN

Watch *NewsStand: CNN & Entertainment Weekly* every Thursday night at 10 p.m. (ET)

**24 Gross Encounters** What is that in Cameron Diaz's hair?! The stomach-turning humor in *There's Something About Mary* has its roots in a long tradition of movie scenes that are hideous, horrifying, and hilarious. BY DAVID HOCHMAN

**32 Don't Tell Mama** Natasha Richardson shows off her range by displaying her dark side in Broadway's *Cabaret* while yukking it up in *The Parent Trap*. Who does she think she is? Vanessa Redgrave? BY STEVE DALY

**36 Kids Slay the Darndest Things** *Scream* turned buckets of blood into barrels of bucks, and now everyone wants a slice of the action. A how-to guide from the set of *Disturbing Behavior*. BY DAVID HOCHMAN

**38 Comedy of Errors** If only *Good Morning America's* current ratings slide were funny. BY JOE FLINT

**Entertainment Weekly**  
FRIDAY, JULY 31, 1998

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OWEN GLEIBERMAN on *The Negotiator*; also *Disturbing Behavior* and *Mafia!* **PLUS:** Reel World; Parents' Guide.

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DAVID KUSHNER on new Web studios creating original online entertainment. **PLUS:** Heroes in the den.

## DEPARTMENTS

**18 CLOSE-UP** Little-known but very busy actor Paul Giamatti may end the summer with the best record in Hollywood.

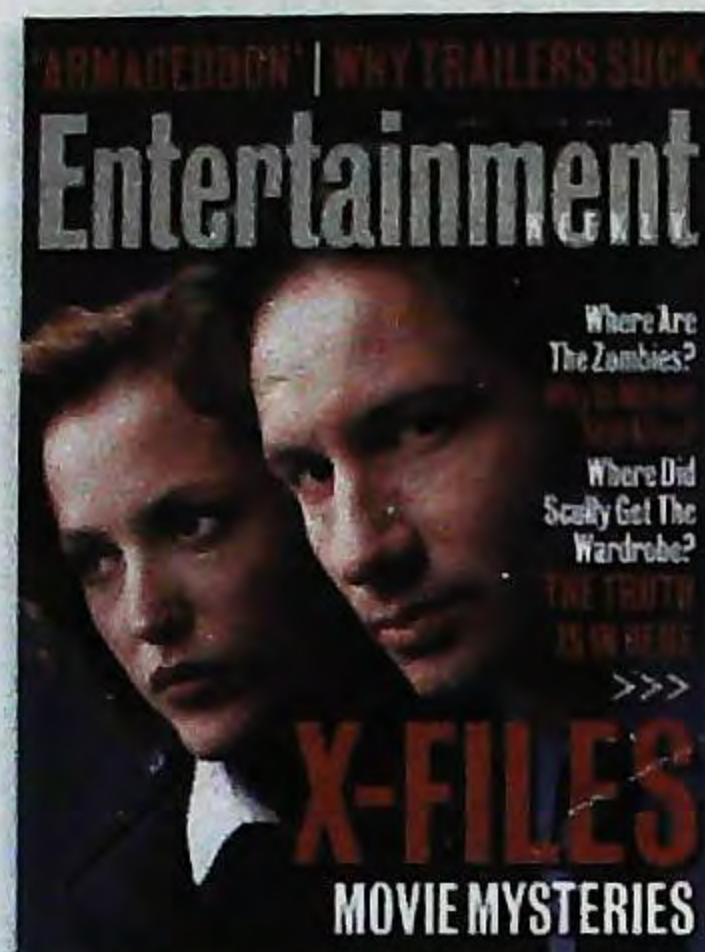
**20 TRENDS** What would happen if teenage girls ran Hollywood? More Elijah Wood, Puff Daddy, *My So-Called Life*, and definitely another *Titanic*.

**4 MAIL** Some readers tire of *X-Files* covers, but others can't get enough; too-revealing trailers.

**84 ENCORE** Aug. 5, 1962: Marilyn Monroe dies of a drug overdose.

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## MAIL

Even the most devoted *X-Files* fans expressed their longing for a moratorium on Mulder and Scully after our second cover story in four weeks (#440, July 10): "I can't believe I'm saying this, but I would rather see another *Seinfeld* cover than one more on *The X-Files*," says Mary McDermott of Carol Stream, Ill. "If there is some sort of EW-*X-Files* conspiracy, you owe it to your readers to let us know," writes Stephen Lenz of New York City. We had our own suspicions of conspiracy when we saw the replies to Jim Mullen's comment on Culture Club's reunion tour—"Who cares?" "So far, Jim, enough people to sell out more than a few of the tour dates," offers Mark Davis of West Hollywood, Calif. Looks like instant karma chameleon's gonna get you, Jim.

## Conspiracy Theories

THANK YOU A MILLION times for your humorous article on the *X-Files* movie. Although I enjoyed the film, I really wouldn't have minded that gratuitous shot of David Duchovny's behind.

**TIFFANY WATTS**

petrie@pensys.com  
Delavan, Wis.

HEY, I LOVE *THE X-FILES* so much that I would be eternally grateful if you kept up the good work by continuing to put it on the cover, say, every other week or so. Better still, make that David Duchovny by himself, wearing something revealing. I love his wry wit, intelligence, and good looks. Now, if you could get somebody who interviews him as well as the photographer photographs him, we would be all set.

**HEIDI WILBARGER**

GeoRed@aol.com  
Nashville

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HOW MANY TIMES WILL we see David and Gillian on the cover this summer? You just had a week off with the double issue (which was brilliant). You should be all rested now. Focus on something else.

**BECKY LEE**

Houston

## Trailer Trashed

I AM SO GLAD YOU addressed the problem of over-revealing trailers. I saw a trailer for the upcoming Nicolas Cage film *Snake Eyes*, which features a multilayered conspiracy, a muddled assassination plot, and a disguised femme fatale. I cringe every time I think about it. The trailer for this movie, which promised to have as many surprises as *The Usual Suspects*, reveals every surprise.

**TRAVIS BRUGGEMAN**

tbruggem@u.washington.edu  
Kirkland, Wash.

THANK YOU FOR ADDRESSING what is sometimes the best part of going to the movies, the trailers. I am not sure which makes me feel cheated the most: when they give too much of the story away, or when the preview is more inter-

esting than the actual movie (a certain large green lizard comes to mind).

**JIM CAWLO**

jcawlo@mindspring.com  
Mechanicsburg, Pa.

## Independent Thinking

YOUR 1998 STUDIO scorecard was great, but I would like to express a different theory about Miramax's strategy. Could it be that they purposely mix moneymaking films like *Scream 2* with smaller films that don't kick big revenue so that exceptional, important films like *Welcome to Sarajevo* have a chance to be created and seen? Perhaps the studio actually believes that there's more to making movies than making money?

**LIZ RIZZO**

Boynton Beach, Fla.

## Devil's Advocate

THE ANSWER IS YES! Michael Bay is the devil—at least when it comes to filmmaking. The devil preys on the worst of us as human beings, tempts us, then drives us to excess. More! Louder! Bigger! Sound familiar? The claim that he is only giving the public what they want is no defense. If his creativity and skills as a storyteller do not exceed the limited imagi-

nation of the general public, then he has no business being in the privileged position of making films. A filmmaker should strive to give the public something better than what they want.

**CLIFF SPRINGS**

cliffie@aol.com  
West Columbia, S.C.

## Belle Ringer

THANK YOU FOR YOUR piece on Olivia de Havilland of *Gone With the Wind*. Being such a big fan of the movie, I was thrilled to hear from such a remarkable woman.

**LARAIN FRID**

RaineF77@yahoo.com  
Augusta, Ga.

CORRECTION: Until two years ago neurofibromatosis was thought to have been the disease that afflicted the *Elephant Man*. New research suggests he suffered from the extremely rare condition called *Proteus syndrome* (*Encore*).

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## EW Daily

Read online-only news about Cameron Diaz, *Zorro*, and the H.O.R.D.E. tour.

## Something About Gross-Outs

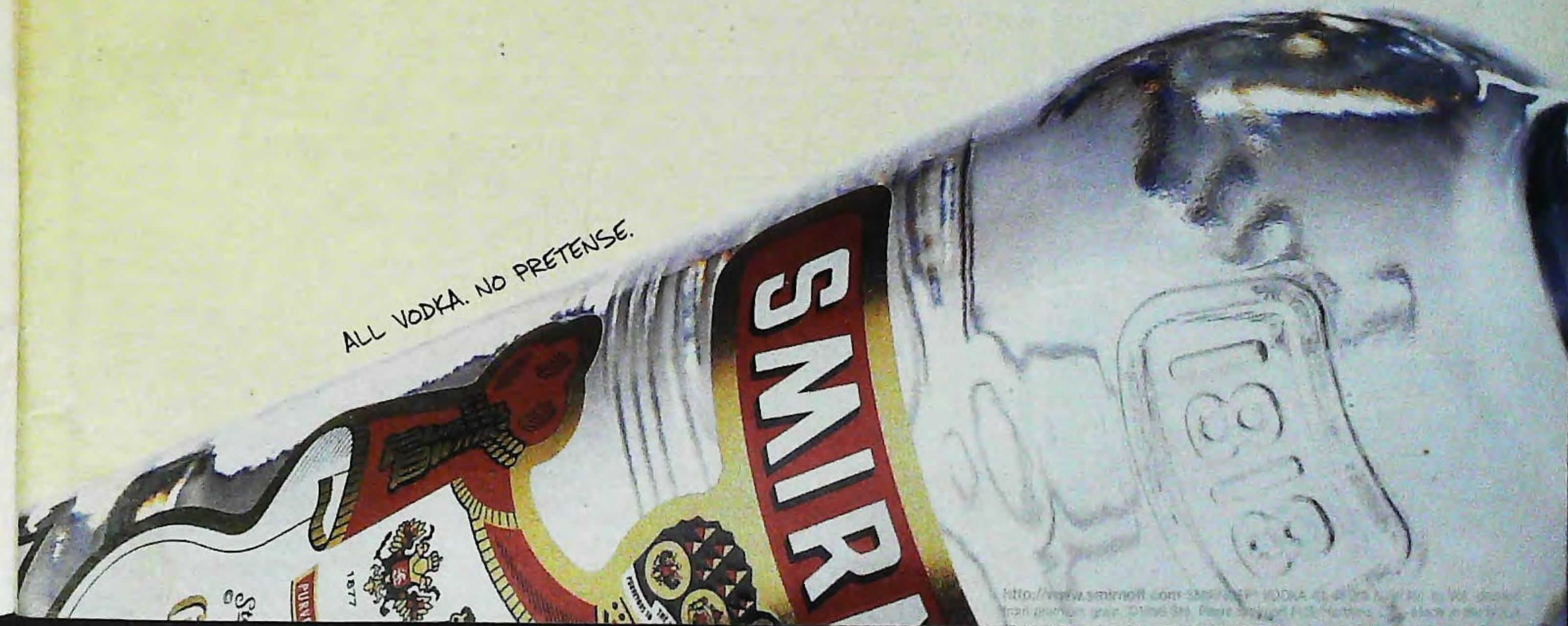
Talk about your favorite gross-out movie in the message boards.

## NEXT WEEK IN EW

We pick the 25 greatest film actors of the '90s. Plus reviews of  
◆ *BASEketball* (Movies)  
◆ Elmore Leonard's *Maximum Bob* (Television)  
◆ The nostalgic reinvention of VH1 (Music)  
◆ Music festivals online (Multimedia)

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This summer,  
terror won't be taking  
a vacation.

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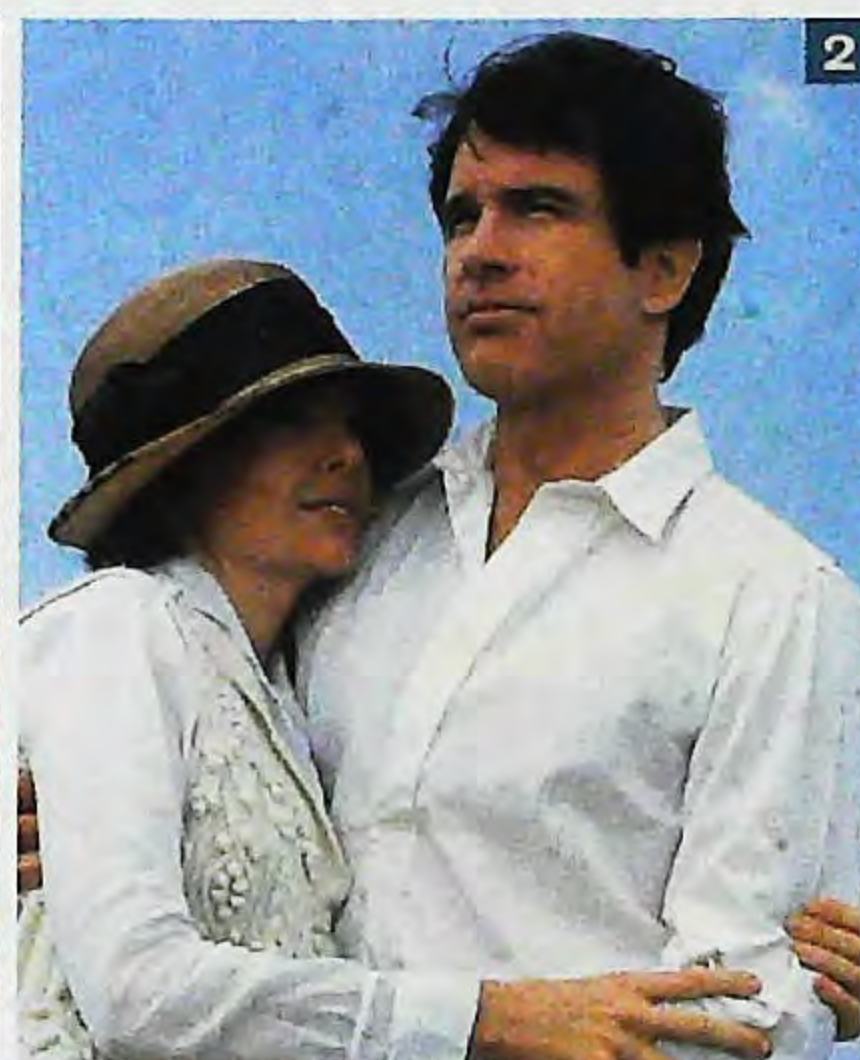
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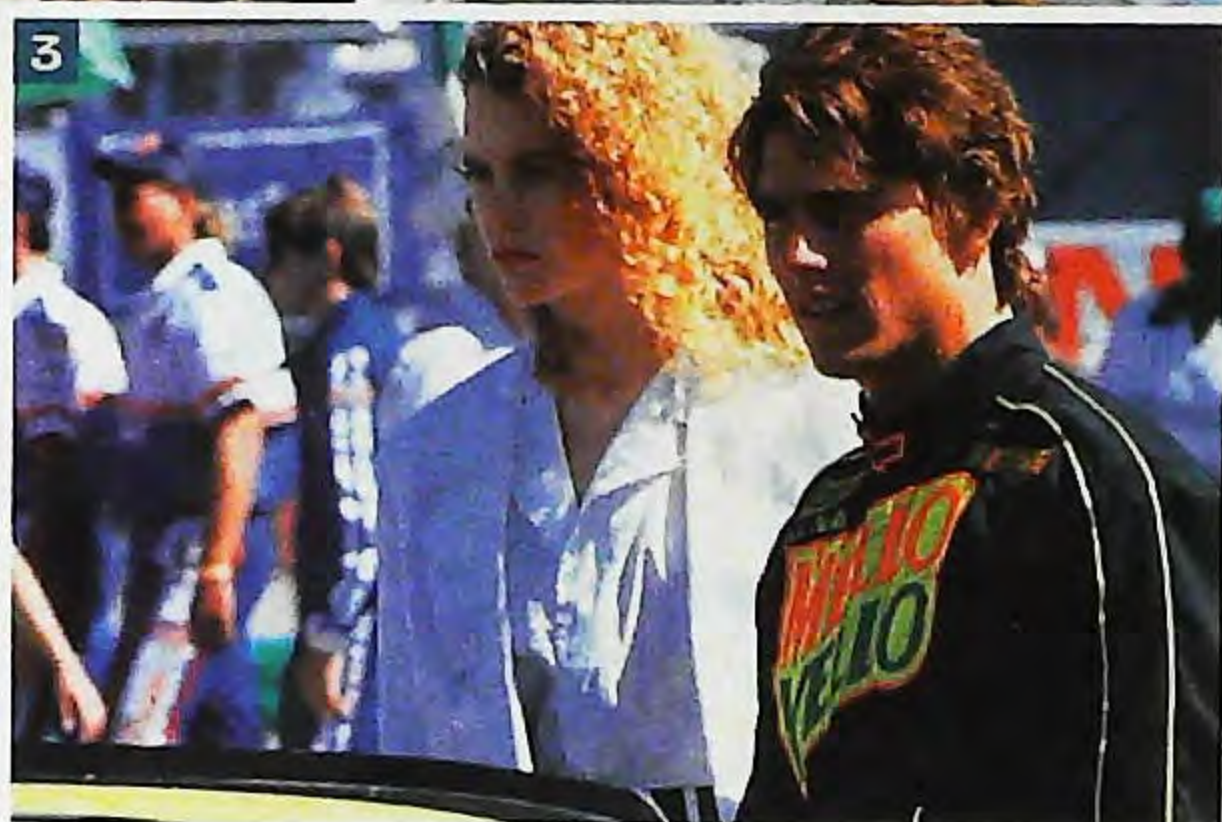


# NEWSNOTES

JULY 31, 1998 | MOVIES | TV | BOOKS | MUSIC | VIDEO | MULTIMEDIA | EDITED BY ALBERT KIM



**REELING IN THE YEARS**  
In their previous film encounters, (1) Hanks and Ryan were *Volcano* lovers; (2) Keaton and Beatty saw *Reds*; (3) Kidman and Cruise gathered *Thunder*; (4) Gere and Roberts looked *Pretty*



## Seeing Doubles

The second (and third) comings of Hollywood's most dynamic duos.  
by Suna Chang

**H**OLLYWOOD KNOWS: It takes two, baby. Disaster flicks will come and go, giant lizards may rule for a day, but when it comes to hot commodities, a good pairing will always be in fashion. (Think Tracy and Hepburn.) With that in mind, it's no wonder

that a slew of tried-and-true cinematic couples are planning to reunite for encores. "It can be a very wise move," says Paul Dergarabedian, president of the box office tracking company Exhibitor Relations. "You generate instant interest. It's like a rock group getting back together.

Everybody's psyched for it." Among the couples that you've definitely seen somewhere before:

■ **Old flames** Diane Keaton and Warren Beatty **Previous coupling** 1981's *Reds* **Critics said** "He's too polite...[but] what [Beatty] does supply is

the crucial sexual chemistry with Keaton." **Next date** New Line's comedy *Town & Country*, due in late '99. They play a well-heeled couple whose perfect life suddenly spirals out of control. **Heat index** Tepid. With 61-year-old Beatty and 52-year-old Keaton in the leads, *Country* could be

like watching Leo and Kate's parents get it on. But then, director Peter Chelsom did give some sex appeal to another aging Beatty—Ned, in 1991's *Hear My Song*.

■ **Old flames** Julia Roberts and Rupert Everett **Previous coupling** Last year's *My Best Friend's Wedding*. (All right, so he was gay. They still had chemistry.) **Critics said** *Wedding's* end offered "a new take on 'happily ever after.'" **Next date** Disney's romantic comedy *Martha and Arthur*. In the early stages, the script has the stars playing a married couple who have it all—except the husband's gay. **Heat index** Unseasonably hot. The perfect couple + no sex = dynamic tension.

■ **Old flames** Natasha Richardson and Liam Neeson **Previous coupling** 1994's *Nell* **Critics said** Neeson and Richardson "generate palpable warmth." **Next date** The duo is considering *Asylum*, a drama about the wife of an insane-asylum doctor who be-

gins an affair with an artist convicted of murdering his wife (see story on page 32). **Heat index** Hot but hazy. With backwoods wholesomeness out of the way, this real-life husband-and-wife team could ignite.

■ **Old flames** Julia Roberts and Richard Gere **Previous coupling** 1990's *Pretty Woman* **Critics said** Roberts is "a



**MAD ABOUT YOU**  
Neeson and Richardson in *Nell*; left, Curtis and Myers in *Halloween*

knockout...[Gere] manages to be dapper, amusing...the perfect foil." **Next date** The pair will reportedly reunite for Paramount's comedy *Runaway Bride*. Gere plays a writer who falls for Roberts, a woman who's jilted several men at the altar. **Heat index** Tropical. Audiences

loved the fairy-tale spin the two put on prostitution. Just think what they can do for fear of commitment.

■ **Old flames** Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise **Previous couplings** 1990's *Days of Thunder*, 1992's *Far and Away* **Critics said** In *Far*, "Cruise tries Clark Gable on for size.... Kidman has a go at Barbara Stanwyck."



**MAD ABOUT YOU**  
Neeson and Richardson in *Nell*; left, Curtis and Myers in *Halloween*

**Next date** Warner's forever-in-production thriller *Eyes Wide Shut*, due, uh, when director Stanley Kubrick says it is. The real-life married couple play psychiatrists who dive into a kinky underworld. **Heat index** Blistering. At this point, just a release date would turn us on.

■ **Old flames** Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks **Previous couplings** 1990's *Joe Versus the Volcano*, 1993's *Sleepless in Seattle* **Critics said** In *Sleepless*, they were "terrifically attractive." **Next date** Warner's *You've Got Mail*, due in December. The pair—working again with *Sleepless* director Nora Ephron—play feuding bookstore owners who fall in love over the Internet. **Heat index** A real scorcher. The favorite girl next door meets the favorite boy next door.

■ **Old flames** Jamie Lee Curtis and Michael Myers **Previous coupling** 1978's *Halloween*, 1981's *Halloween II* **Critics said** She's "suggestive of an...ungainly young Lauren Bacall." He's "the bogeyman." **Next date** Dimension's *Halloween: H20*, out Aug. 5 **Heat index** Bloodcurdling. Rekindling their love-hate relationship, these cutups can be counted on to leave audiences screaming with pleasure. (Additional reporting by Daniel Fierman and Will Lee)

## Just Scooby-Doo It

Zoinks! Has someone been pushing Scooby snacks in Hollywood? That would explain the way everyone has suddenly gotten all worked up over *Scooby-Doo*. Indeed, everyone's favorite ghost-sniffing hound is suddenly an A-lister. Last week, a spokesperson for Mike Myers confirmed that the comedian will script and possibly star in a live-action *Scooby-Doo* feature for Warner Bros. (Reps for the studio were unaware of the project.) In the meantime, Warner will release the Great Dane's direct-to-video *Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island* in September. And you want street cred? *Zombie Island* will feature alt-rockers Third Eye Blind doing a cover of the familiar theme song.

"*Scooby-Doo* had great comedy, rock music,

and it starred teenagers," says Mike Lazzo, senior programming and production VP at the Cartoon Network. "That's why it's lasted." Lazzo points out that reruns of the original *Scooby-Doo, Where Are You?* (1969-72) were the network's highest-rated program for the first

quarter of 1998. And Scooby's Q-rating makes him top dog at the net, ahead of even *Fred Flintstone*. As for casting, it's too early for real names—but we'd love to see Denise Richards as danger-prone Daphne, Matthew McConaughey as blond, bland Fred, and Janeane Garofalo as dweeby Velma. And here's some more free advice, from Casey Kasem, the original Shaggy: "Keep it light and be true to the characters." As Scooby would say: "Rrhat's right, Raggy!" —Joe Neumaier



JUST GHOST TO SHOW YA Shag and Scooby; Myers (inset)





“

"Brilliant... 'Titanic' swept the Oscars in a year when 'Lolita' should have..." — THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

"...stunning and emotionally gripping..." — THE NEW YORK TIMES

"...[Showtime] wins my vote for Artistic Bravery in the Face of Ignorance..." — NEW YORK POST

"Showtime's recent theme is 'edgy and fearless.'" — NEWSWEEK

"Programming moves don't get any gutsier..." — THE BUFFALO NEWS

"...a touch of greatness..." — TIME

"A film for our time..." — THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

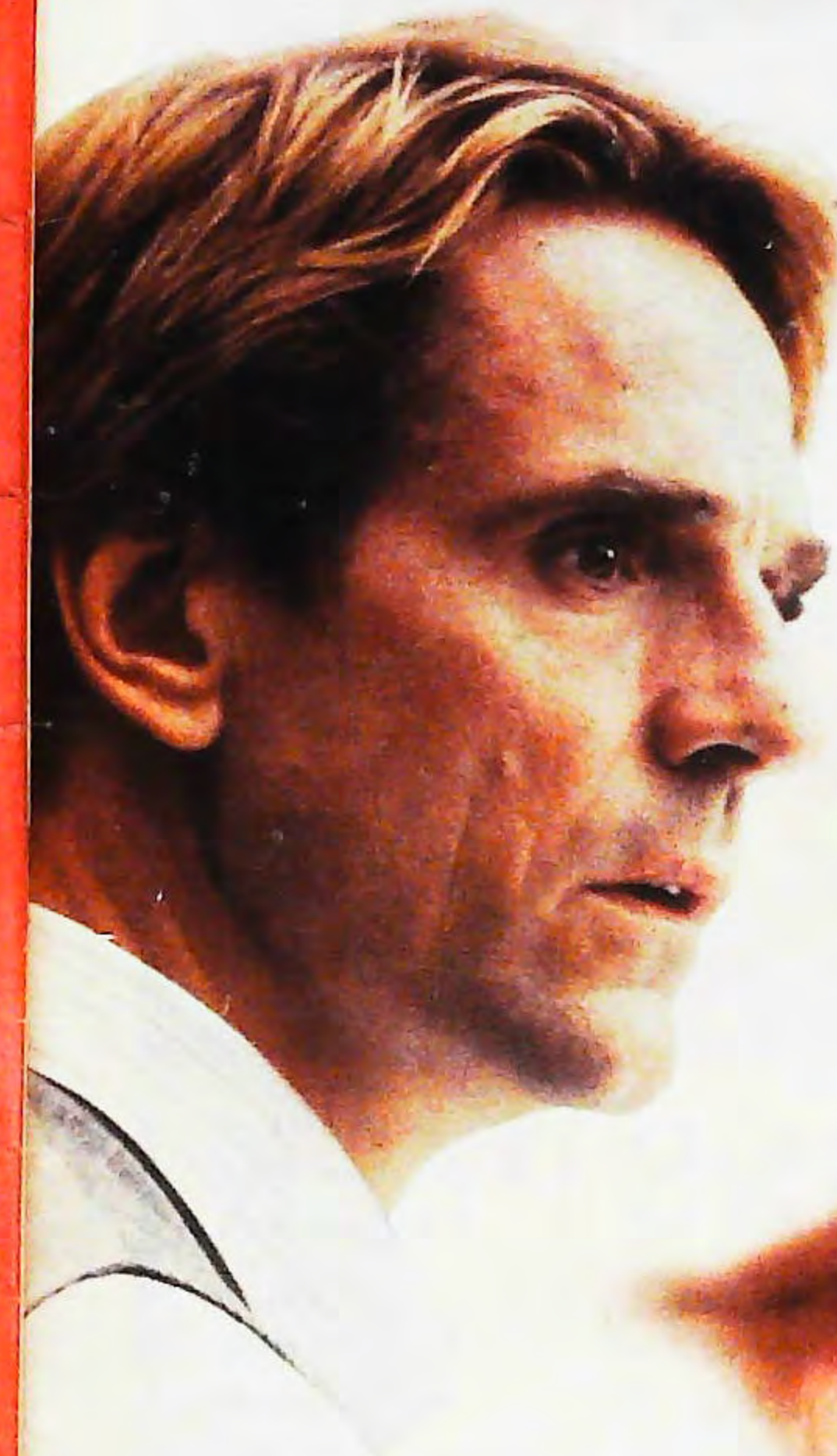
”

Showtime breaks through.  
Again.

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MELANIE GRIFFITH

FRANK LANGELLA



# Lolita

A Film By ADRIAN LYNE

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Director of Photography HOWARD ATHERTON, B.S.C. Screenplay By VLADIMIR NABOKOV Screenplay By STEPHEN SCHIFF Produced By MARIO KASSAR and JOEL B. MICHAELS Directed By ADRIAN LYNE

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MPAA

TV

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# HOTSheet

What the country is talking about this week...

- 1 **Saving Private Ryan** Some say this war movie is too realistic. But so far everyone who's seen it has lived.
- 2 **Aerosmith** Their drummer burned himself at a gas station. Earning him an automatic spot in *This Is Spinal Tap II*.
- 3 **Mike Tyson** The ear-biting fighter has applied for a boxing license in New Jersey. Where being an ex-con is considered a plus.
- 4 **The 100 Best Novels of the Century** Also known as the 100 Least-Read Books of the Century.
- 5 **Fun-ship flambé** More than 3,400 vacations were cut short when a cruise ship caught fire. It was a big mistake—they were supposed to get food poisoning.



46 **David Duchovny** He made Mattel remake some *X-Files* dolls because he wasn't happy with his. He wants the kind that doesn't wet its pants.

7 **Paula Jonz** She might as well change her name. Would you recognize her after a nose job?

8 **Popcorn** Several companies have banned the microwaved treat because of the odor. It was

taking employees' minds off personal phone calls.

9 **Disturbing Behavior** Unruly teenagers are turned into Stepford teens. The bad news is that it's not a documentary.

10 **Mafia!** A spoof of gangster movies from one of the makers of *Airplane!* Finally, the fun side of getting whacked.

11 **David Letterman** A local affiliate owner took him off the air because the show couldn't provide studio tickets for his friends. Sounds like network executive material.

12 **The heat wave** It's much too early to know if it's global warming. We should wait until it's too late to do anything and be sure.

13 **ourfirsttime.com** The two 18-year-old virgins doing it on the Net turned out to be a scam. They couldn't find two.

14 **Jerry Springer** Despite the promises, his shows are returning to idiotic, mindless slugfests. Unlike, say, *Crossfire*.

15 **Sugar Busters!** The latest weight-loss fad blames sugars, not fat, for your extra pounds. It's great because you can become thin and bitter at the same time.



A 'PARENT' MOTIVE (1) Richardson, Lohan, and Quaid; (2) costar Lisa Ann Walter has got a brand-new bag; (3) Marie Osmond and son Michael; (4) Sarandon with kids Eva, Jack, and Miles; (5) Ryan with pop group Nobody's Angel, who sing "Let's Get Together" on the soundtrack



## A TWINS PEEK

scene

IT WAS MORE LIKE SUMMER CAMP THAN A Hollywood shindig. On July 20 celebrities brought their youngsters out for the evening to celebrate Disney's remake of the classic kids' caper *The Parent Trap*. The open-air party in Westwood featured an area dubbed Camp Walden, just like the one in the film where the twins reunite. Among the attractions: sand painting, a trampoline, and a 30-foot Ferris wheel, which had guests lining up for a spin. Well, the small guests anyway. "I'm having an out-of-body experience," said *Trap* producer Charles Shyer, "so I'm not too anxious to ride that thing." On the grown-up side, Dustin Hoffman, Susan Sarandon, and Anthony Edwards were among those congratulating stars Natasha Richardson—who flew in from New York on her night off from *Cabaret*—and Dennis Quaid, who arrived with wife Meg Ryan. "It was fun," noted Quaid. "Who wouldn't want to play everyone's dream dad?" His movie kid, meanwhile, was the one most enthralled by the *Trap*-ings. "I love it," gushed 12-year-old Lindsay Lohan, who played twins Hallie and Annie. "When I was young I always dreamed of making a movie." (The precocious Lohan could make Hanson feel like old-timers.) Still, as the night wore on, she eventually showed her age, quietly slipping out of her party platforms...and into sneakers. —Tricia Laine

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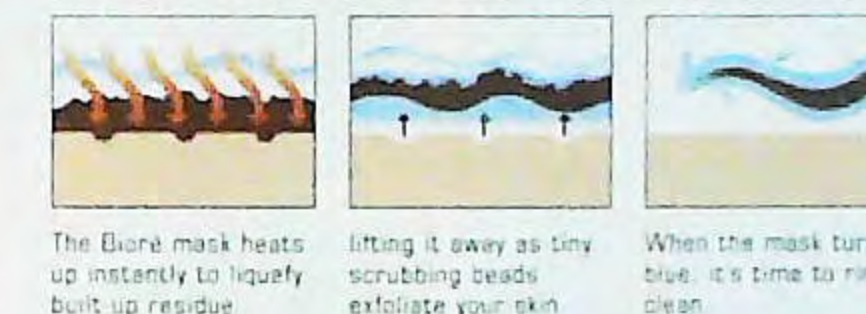
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# DATE BOOK July 27-August 9

A guide to notable parties, premieres, and happenings

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday

<p><b>27</b> <b>Halloween:</b> <i>H20</i> premiere party at the Geffen Playhouse in Westwood, Calif. Expected to attend: Jamie Lee Curtis, Michael Myers, Leatherface, Freddy Krueger...</p>	<p><b>28</b> The controversial <i>Lolita</i> (which makes its TV debut on Showtime on Aug. 2) is shown as a feature at New York's Lincoln Center. No one under 18 permitted without a parent or Woody Allen.</p>	<p><b>29</b> A room full of men sporting wood: The International Ventriloquists Association holds its annual convention in Las Vegas.</p>	<p><b>30</b> Dig out your Capezios. The Big Rewind unfolds at Radio City Music Hall, with '80s acts Boy George and Culture Club, Howard Jones, and Human League. ▶</p>	<p><b>31</b> </p>	<p><b>1</b> </p>	<p><b>2</b> </p>
<p><b>3</b> What's publicity got to do with it? Angela Bassett's <i>How Stella Got Her Groove Back</i> has a premiere bash in L.A. ▶ </p>				<p><b>7</b> Must See Broadway. Jerry Seinfeld retires his old stand-up material with the final show of his concert tour, at New York's Broadhurst Theatre (to be broadcast live on HBO).</p>		

## Monitor



FOSTER



BALDWIN

**BIRTHS** Actress Jodie Foster, 35, welcomed her first child, 7-pound, 8-ounce Charles, on July 20, in L.A. Foster has not revealed the identity of the baby's father.

**ENGAGED** Actress Raquel Welch, 57, and restaurateur Richard Palmer, 44, announced plans to marry next year. It will be her fourth marriage and his second.

**LAWSUITS** On July 20, a Van Nuys, Calif., jury ordered actor Alec Baldwin, 40, to pay photographer Alan Zanger, 53, \$4,500 in civil damages, while at the same time ruling that Zanger had acted negligently. In October 1995, Baldwin allegedly roughed up Zanger after he tried to snap pics of Baldwin's wife, Kim Basinger, and their newborn daughter, Ireland, as they came home from the hospital.

Although Baldwin was acquitted of criminal charges, Zanger filed a \$200,000 assault suit against Baldwin; in response, the star filed an invasion-of-privacy countersuit. "I am very satisfied with the verdict," said Baldwin in a statement. Says Zanger: "I clearly won the right to take my pictures, and that's what this was all about."... Steven Seagal, 47, filed a \$750,000 breach-of-contract suit against producer David Kirkpatrick (*The Opposite of Sex*) and the production company New Angel, Inc., July 16, in L.A. Seagal alleges Kirkpatrick reneged on a \$250,000 deal to cast the actor in Shirley MacLaine's directorial debut, *Bruno*. Kirkpatrick declines to comment.

**RECOVERING** Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer, 46, from second-

degree burns on his arm when his Ferrari caught fire while it was being filled with gas, July 15, in Scituate, Mass. Investigators reportedly said that Kramer, who was sitting in the driver's seat, had left the engine running while the car was being fueled. Kramer was treated at and released from South Shore Hospital in Weymouth, Mass. The injury will not affect the Aug. 14 start date of Aerosmith's U.S. tour.

**DEATHS** Actor Joseph Maher, 64, of a brain tumor, July 17, in L.A. Best known for Broadway performances in Joe Orton's *What the Butler Saw* and *Loot*, Maher also appeared in numerous features and TV shows, including a memorable turn on a 1991 episode of *Seinfeld* as an inebriated airline passenger who saddles Jerry with his dog, Farfel. —Dave Karger

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# MORE PICTURES.





# Summer's Secret Star

**CLOSE-UP** Who's on the hottest streak in Hollywood? Ubiquitous character actor Paul Giamatti. **by Benjamin Svetkey**

**S**O YOU WANT TO MAKE A HIT MOVIE. You've tried crowd-pleasing special effects, hung A-list names on your marquee, spent millions on a marketing campaign. And you still end up celebrating your gala premiere at Blockbuster's direct-to-video bin. ♦ Never fear: Next time, remember the secret of cinematic success: Paul Giamatti.

Since his big-screen breakout as Pig Vomit, Howard Stern's bug-eyed nemesis in 1997's *Private Parts*, this 31-year-old Yale-trained actor has become Hollywood's hottest lucky charm, popping up for brief but propitious turns in one box office smash after another. He took a drag

from Julia Roberts' cigarette as a bellboy in *My Best Friend's Wedding*, helped Ed Harris work the controls in *The Truman Show*, and tried to get Eddie Murphy *not* to talk to the animals as the evil psychiatrist in *Dr. Dolittle*. And this week—in his latest don't-blink tour de force—

hattan loft he shares with his screenwriter wife, Liz, 34. "But I find these plain little characters fascinating. All the actors I like played those sorts of parts. Elisha Cook Jr., the weaselly guy who gets killed in *The Maltese Falcon*? I love him. Or Peter Lorre? Man, he was *awesome*."

Giamatti's own background is not quite as plain as his favorite characters'. His father, A. Bartlett Giamatti, who died in 1989, was president of Yale ("I had a *very* good in," the actor says of his acceptance into the prestigious drama school) and later served as Major League Baseball commissioner (he kicked Pete Rose out of the majors for gambling). And while Giamatti's un-chiseled looks don't have autograph hounds chasing him around New York, he does have a knack for getting noticed on screen, even in his dinkiest parts.

he'll spend a few moments with Tom Hanks on the battlefields of *Saving Private Ryan*. All together, it comes to about 15 minutes of actual screen time so far this year—but it will probably make Giamatti 1998's highest-grossing actor.

"My agents were not crazy about me doing *Ryan* because it wasn't a big part," Giamatti admits, settling into a chair in the shabby-chic Man-

"He reminds me of one of those character actors from the 1930s and '40s," offers casting director David Rubin, who hired Giamatti for his next small-but-notable role, playing the most memorable of Samuel L. Jackson's hostages in *The Negotiator*, opening next week. "He has a specific, indelible look. You're always happy to see him on the screen. That's *exactly* what you're looking for when casting supporting parts."

Those supporting parts will soon be growing bigger. Giamatti will stretch in next month's *Safe Men*, an indie comedy in which he'll play a henchman for the Jewish Mob (named Veal Chop, no less). And later this summer he'll begin his most ambitious part yet, playing Andy Kaufman's best friend in *Man on the Moon*, Milos Forman's much anticipated biopic starring Jim Carrey. "It's so weird," he says. "Just because I've had small parts in these big movies, people offer you more and more stuff. They get all these expectations for you. What if I suck in all these things? What if I just *blow*?"

"Oh, I definitely think Paul could play lead roles—he's incredibly talented," answers Francine Maisler, the casting director who hired him for *Man on the Moon*. "He could do almost anything he wanted. Although," she adds after a pause, "I wouldn't put him up for any Mel Gibson roles just yet."

From Pig Vomit to Hamlet? Maybe it's not that big a stretch after all. ■



**PAULIE, SURE** Giamatti with Harris in *Truman* (top); with Tom Sizemore in *Ryan*

REMEMBER THE  
FIRST TIME SOMEONE SAID

great  
old rocker

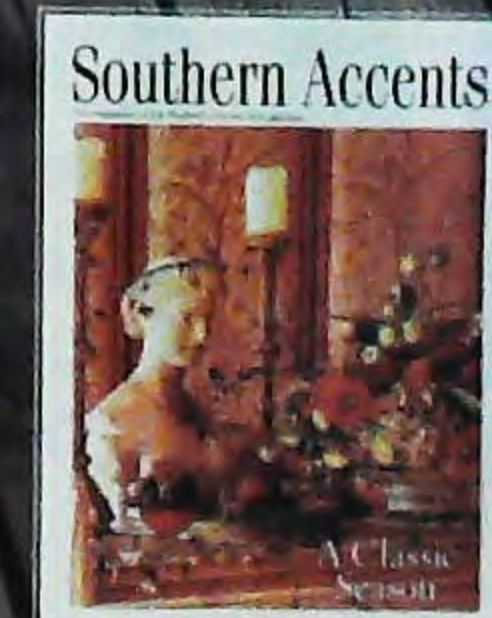
AND YOU DIDN'T PICTURE  
Jerry Garcia?



There might have been a time when rock and roll mattered more than tongue and groove. After all, everybody is young once. But childhood, mercifully, is fleeting. While good taste, thankfully, is not.

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# If Girls Ran Hollywood...

**TRENDS** ...you'd be seeing a *Titanic* sequel next summer. What else might happen if the rules of Tinseltown came from the mouths of babes? by Degen Pener

**W**HAT'S A TEENAGE GIRL TO DO? Everywhere she turns, the entertainment industry is greedily trying to get inside her head. And for good reason: Where would *Titanic*, the casts of *Dawson's Creek*, *PO5*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and the current slasher-

pic boom be without her? Girl Power can even explain the head-scratching \$138 million success of *Deep Impact*: He's no Leo, but Elijah Wood—and the teen story line in which he was featured—was a big draw for girls. "In the past, you had people asking, How big could this market be if it caters only to a fe-

male teenage audience? Because without the males, forget it," says Craig Zadan, exec producer of 1997's *Cinderella*. "That's just flip-flopped. You have people going, We need more teen series, movies, and records. It's overwhelming." With teen girls making such an impression in Tinsel-

town, EW wondered, What would happen if girls wielded real power in Hollywood? To find out, we polled the daughters of EW staffers about what they'd do if they became entertainment moguls. You'll find the results below, along with our observations on how things would change if girls ran Hollywood.

**1** The \$20 million players would be Neve Campbell, Claire Danes, and Drew Barrymore rather than Tom Cruise, Mel Gibson, and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**2** Director Betty Thomas would be hired to give *Full House* the feature-film treatment she gave *The Brady Bunch*.

**3** Puff Daddy would remake every hit song from the last 20 years and produce songs for all artists in the top 200. Oh, wait, he does that already.

**4** Goodbye, StarTAC. Like, hello, pink beepers.

**5** The top four networks? Fox, The WB, Nick at Nite, and MTV.

**6** Forget *Gone With the Wind*. The movie getting the splashy, fully remastered rerelease would be *Chueless*.

**7** After the First Family leaves the White House,



Chelsea—not Bill—would land a post at DreamWorks.

**8** A *Titanic* sequel? Totally. (One young wannabe pitcher suggests: "Sort of like *Godfather Part II*. It would show Jack's life before he got on the ship and Rose's afterward.").

**9** The teen-catalog company Delia's—known for its strappy tank tops, slip skirts, and platform slides—would open its flagship store at the Rodeo Drive address now occupied by Armani.

**10** Tom Cruise, welcome to elder statesmanship. ("That guy from *Jerry Maguire*," responded one teen when asked whom she might cast in a movie.)

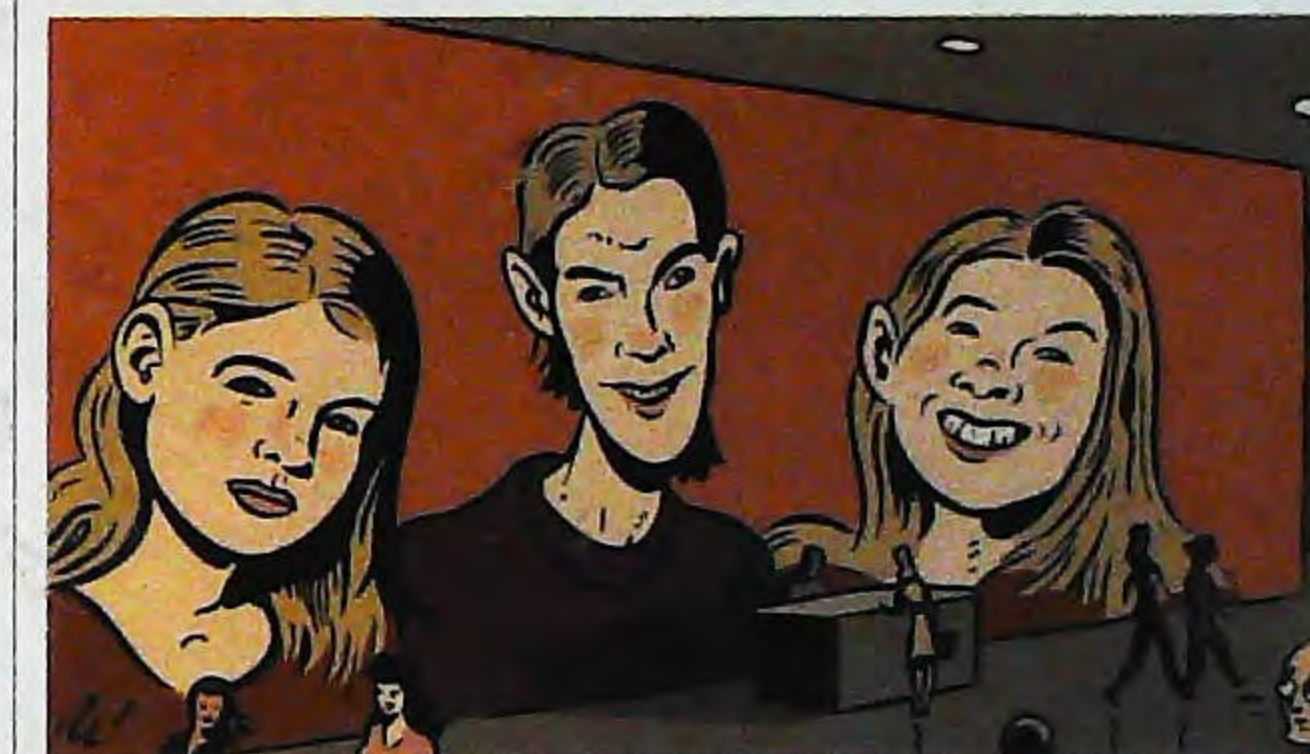
**11** Roman Polanski—no way he's allowed back into Hollywood. ▼

**12** Quick! Greenlight adaptations of books like the history-minded "American Girls Collection"; *Wicked*, the



Oz story told from the witch's point of view; and *P.S. Longer Letter Later*, a story of two girls entering the seventh grade.

**13** That huge Lichtenstein in the lobby of the CAA office? Replace it with



posters of Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath, rapper Mase, and Hanson. ▲

**14** Each Spice Girl could go solo and still have a huge career. (Scary!)

**15** Oscar gowns by Richard Tyler and Vera Wang would give way to designs from Vivienne Tam and Betsey Johnson. And girl movie moguls would wear Adidas shower shoes and Steve Madden platform sneakers to production meetings. No more Manolo Blahnik pumps.

**16** Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon, and Ben Affleck would star in every

single movie ever made. Hmm. Come to think of it, even today's Hollywood executives would likely okay this idea.

**17** Lots of movies about veterinarians starring Doctor Leo. ◀

**18** *My So-Called Life* marathons instead of 24 hours of *Star Trek*.

**19** Dermatologists, not plastic surgeons, would be the most important doctors in town.

**20** On our Power 101? Hard Candy founder

Dineh Mohajer (the equivalent of David Geffen to teens).

**21** "Let's do lunch" would pale in importance next to "Let's go shopping."

**22** Being on an AOL buddy list would be more crucial than speed-dial ranking.

**23** Lisa Simpson—not Bart—would be TIME's most influential cartoon character of the 20th century.

**24** No more focus groups trying to figure out what teenage girls want.

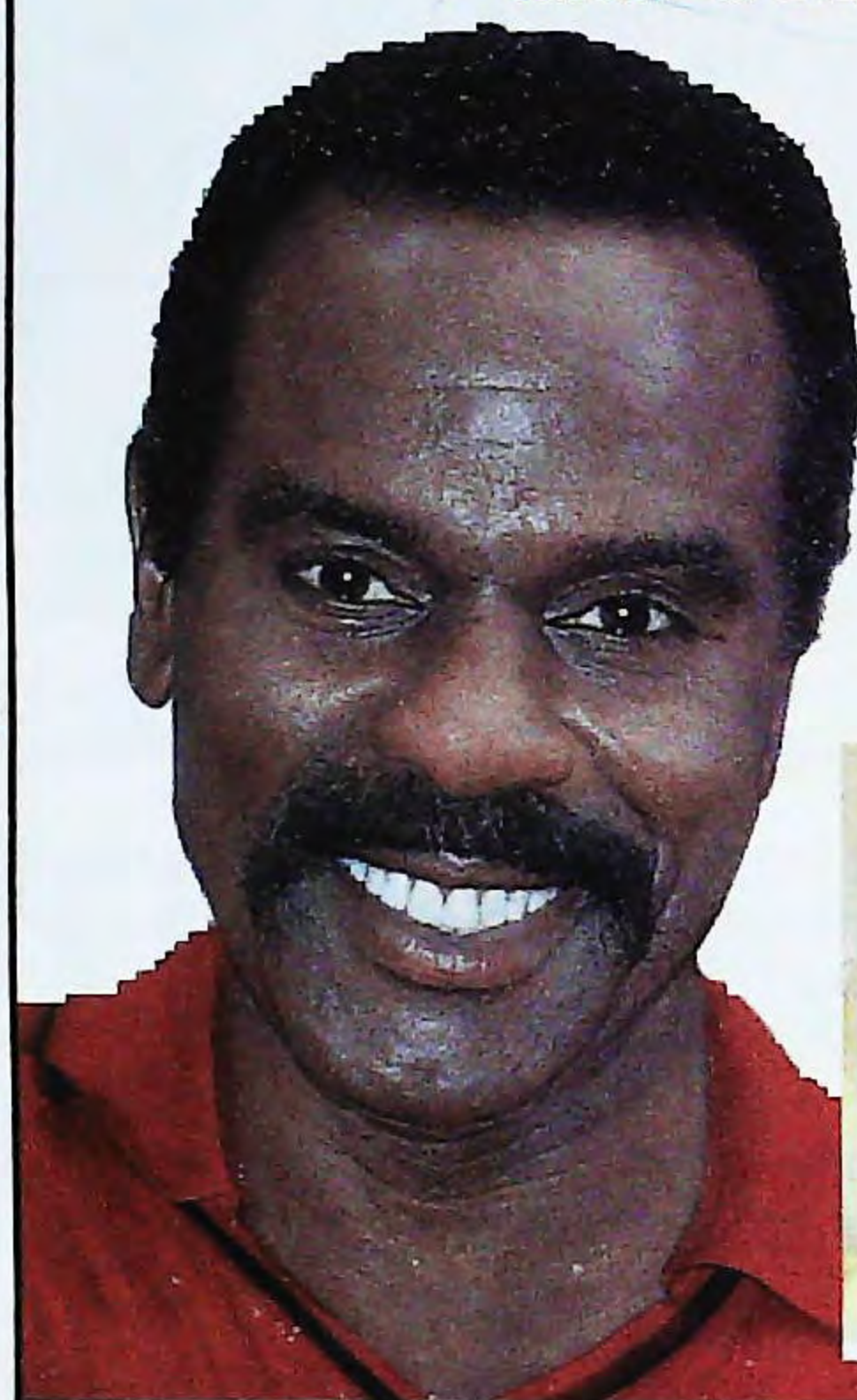
**25** Size would never, ever matter again. ■



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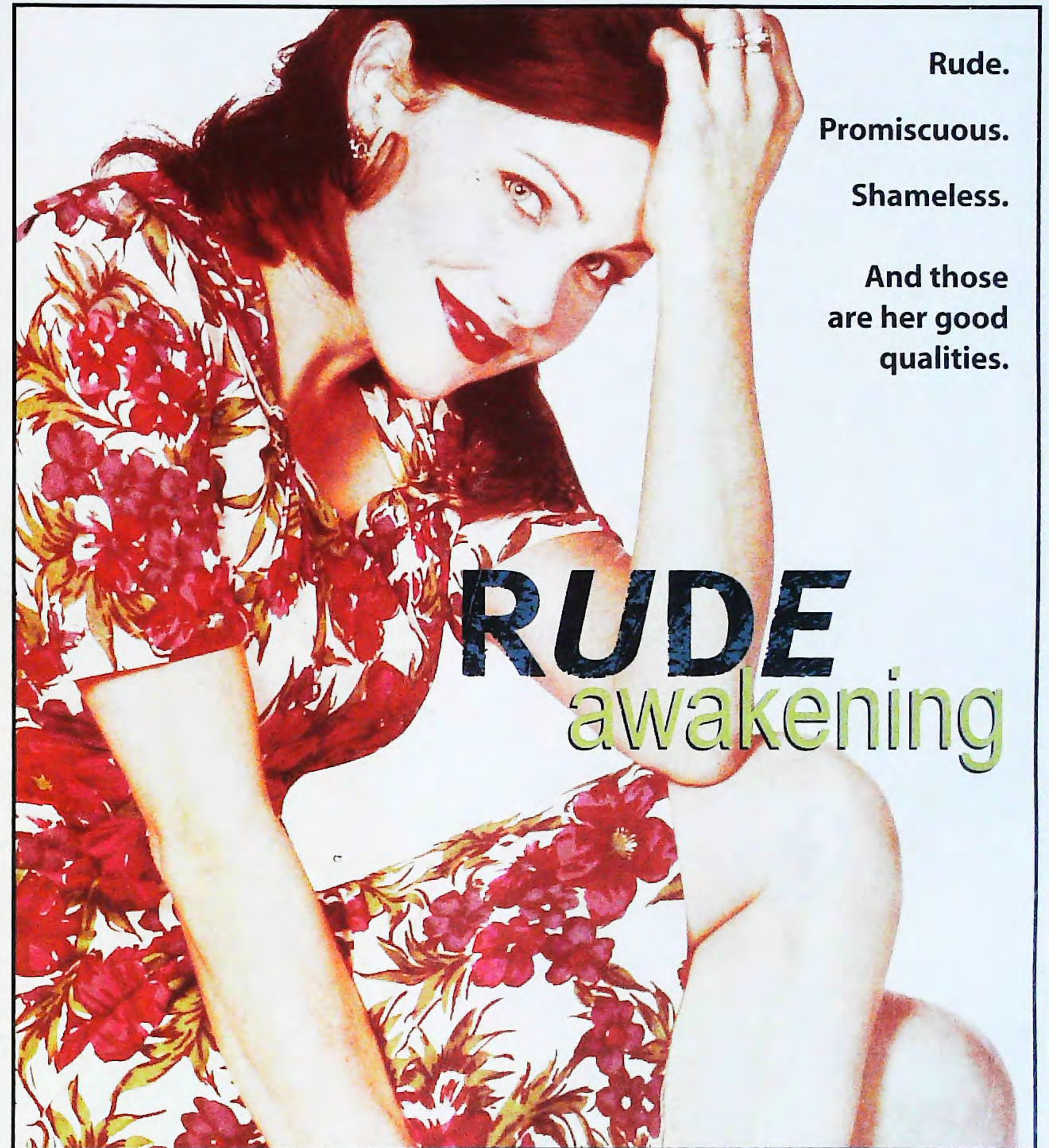
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'There's Something About Mary' is part of a fetch Hollywood Comedy Tradition

# GROSS ENCOUNTERS

BY DAVID HOCHMAN

» THE END IS NEAR. You can taste it. Smell it. See it in the way a pruny old woman in *There's Something About Mary* French-kisses her Border terrier, then lets the pooch snack on Ben Stiller's crotch. In the way a grown man in the upcoming *BASEketball* lactates projectile streams of milk from his nipples. In the way breast jokes and gay jokes are suddenly back. In the way the mentally and physically and dermatologically challenged are getting laughs. And in the way goopy bodily substances and odors are the happiest of happy topics among moviegoing adults again, enjoying a popularity unparalleled since the eras of Molière, Swift, and the Zucker brothers. »

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY BASEMAN



# YEA

THESE ARE ILL-MANNERED TIMES IN THE DARK-ened movie houses of America. The Farrelly brothers, those class clowns who made kid-friendly *Dumb and Dumber* and *Kingpin* (PG-13), are suddenly skewing older and *way* raunchier in *There's Something About Mary* with R-rated gags about vibrators, semen-infused hair products, and a guy who gets his manhood totally snagged in the pants zipper of his prom tux. Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the demented dudes who gave voice to fecal matter in their animated Comedy Central s--tcom *South Park*, make their feature-film debut July 31 in *BASEketball*, a film full of the sort of adults-only sight gags and infantile sex jokes not seen since the *Airplane!* and *Naked Gun* movies (the same director, David Zucker, helped orchestrate them all). The guys' next movie, *Orgazmo*, a raucous comedy about porno movies, has already earned an NC-17 rating. And lest we forget, there's Hal Hartley's latest black satire, *Henry Fool*, in which Parker Posey accepts a wedding proposal after witnessing her beloved's bowel movement. Uh...*mazel tov!*



Think of it as the return of the grown-up gross-out. You'd have to go back to the time when the cast members of *Saturday Night Live* first farted around on screen in *National Lampoon's Animal House*, *Caddyshack*, and *Stripes* to find such a postadolescent appetite for the unappetizing. Sure, horror movies, gangster movies, and war movies have always featured gross-out scenes—from Linda Blair's pea-soup hurl in *The Exorcist* and *The Godfather's* famous horse-head scene to the gut-wrenching portrait of war in this summer's *Saving Private Ryan*. But for a while it looked like political correctness—or was it an unexpected flowering of maturity in Hollywood? (nah!)—had put the kibosh on outlandish comedy. The *Brady Bunch* movies were as wild as wild got. As for a '90s remake of, say, *Porky's*? You'd have had an easier time getting a greenlight on *Springtime for Hitler*. "In the late '80s and early '90s," says Peter Farrelly, "everybody was doing a lot of safe movie comedy. A comedy moment then was, A guy's naked in a bathtub, a rabbi walks in with scissors, walks over and cuts...a lock of the guy's hair! That's funny, but today, he'd have to circumcise the guy. And then, you'd have to make the guy limp around for days after. You can't pull back."

In other words, the lid's open again on Hollywood's toilet



## THE PLOT SICKENS

Ben Stiller sports an unusual accessory in *Mary* (1); breakfast of the champions in *Stand* (2); Mike Myers stalls for time in *Powers* (3); Matt Stone gets milk in *BASEketball* (4); *Dumber's* Jeff Daniels takes his licks (5)



tank, and the water's looking...well, don't even ask. But before blaming the brothers Farrelly or anyone else for the death of culture, remember that the cinematic cesspool runs deep. A semen joke today couldn't have happened had, say, Woody Allen not dressed up like a giant sperm in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex But Were Afraid to Ask*. And where would fart jokes be now without Mel Brooks? To understand why a zippered-over testicle is funny in *Mary*, you need to look back at the earlier gags that made us gag. So take a deep breath, hold your nose, and, if you can bear it, plunge with us into the abominable history of bad taste.

## GONE WITH THE WIND



LET'S FACE FACTS: *TRUMAN SHOW* OR NO *Truman Show*, Jim Carrey owes his career to fart jokes (*In Living Color*, *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective*, *Liar Liar*) and talking butt cheeks (*Ace Ventura* again).

To figure out what got into him, go back almost 25 years. There, you'll find nine cowpokes sitting around a

# THE EXIT FILES

**FIRESIDE FLATULENCE.** Projectile (pea green) vomiting. If you believe the stories, super-sick scenes like these have long sent ticket holders scurrying for the exits or left them convulsing in their seats (but not in a good way). For example: At the 1994 New York Film Festival, a diabetic audience member faints—and stops the movie—when Uma Thurman takes a hypodermic needle to the heart in *Pulp Fiction*. Yet this is a verifiable exception among many urban myths. The story of the moviegoer losing his lunch from the balcony when John Belushi sprays his lunch in *Animal House*, for example, has never been adequately documented. And most theater execs we surveyed deny the existence of cinema freak-outs. According to ushers on the front lines, moviegoers are disturbed most by strobe effects and odd camera movements—not by shocking violence or bodily functions. "Some of the gunfire in *Jackie Brown* caused people to have mild seizures," remembers Brian Roddy of Laemmle's Monica 4 Plex in Santa Monica, Calif. But, says Roddy, it was "one of those Woody Allen films (*Husbands and Wives*) with swinging camera movements that made a lot of people seasick." Alma Monge of the Loews Cineplex Odeon Beverly Center in Los Angeles recalls a group who ended up taking a male friend to the hospital because of the nudity in *Boogie Nights*. "They were going to leave because he wanted to throw up," Monge says. But more often than not, folks flee for the simplest of reasons. "People throwing up because of a movie? I haven't witnessed that yet," says an usher at Laemmle Music Hall 3 in Beverly Hills. "Most of our walk-outs tell us the movies are just boring." —Daniel Fierman, with additional reporting by Carrie Bell and Heidi Nam





# BLOODY 'MARY'

**BODILY FLUIDS**, a man-eating zipper—is there *anything* that the Farrelly brothers weren't willing to put in *There's Something About Mary*? Yes, and here's a sampling of what you won't see and, er, hear:

■ **MATT THE RIPPER** Although Norm the pizza guy alludes to an audible fart, Matt Dillon's first-date flatulence isn't actually heard in the movie. "We cut that joke from the script because it seemed too *Dumb and Dumber*," says Peter Farrelly. "We have high standards, you know."

■ **SCOOBY SNACKS** In a subplot that was trimmed out of *Mary* because of time constraints, Sully (Jeffrey Tambor) went on a bender and left his pets, a Great Dane and an 18-foot snake, to fend for themselves. Somewhere on the cutting-room floor, there's a scene in which Dillon sees the bulging reptile and thinks it swallowed the Great Dane...until the dog comes around the corner. The bulge turns out to be...gulp...Sully.

■ **BREAST REDUCTION** "They had me plucking a hair out of my nipple with tweezers," says Lin Shaye, who plays Magda, Diaz's nosy neighbor with the George Hamilton tan and sagging breasts. (Incidentally, they're prosthetic.) Other stupid boobey tricks you'll miss: Magda scratching and blow-drying the underside of her fake ta-tas. "We decided less was more," says Bob Farrelly. "The breasts were ugly enough that just a flash of them got a big fat 'Eww!' Anything longer would have been too gross." And that's saying a lot. —Tricia Laine, with additional reporting by Dave Karger



campfire, plates dripping with baked beans, harmonica music playing in the distance. Then—pffffff! fshssht! frhonk!—an explosive new use for Dolby sound is born.

The fart scene in Mel Brooks' 1974 Western spoof *Blazing Saddles* reacted like a giant veggie burrito in Hollywood's gastrointestinal tract, which went on to produce *Dumb and Dumber*, and *The Nutty Professor*, to name two odorific examples. "Farting is the great common thread in mankind," says Andrew Bergman, who cowrote *Blazing Saddles* with Brooks and Richard Pryor. "Yet it was so outside the bounds of manners that no one had ever put it on screen before. It was kind of historic."

## BOWELED OVER



THE MERE SIGHT OF IT WAS ENOUGH to clear the pool in *Caddyshack* (even though it was really just a floating Baby Ruth bar). When it hit the fan in *Airplane!*, Robert Stack almost didn't do the scene ("He thought it was so gross," Zucker says). And people ran from midnight screenings when a character crawled through it in John Waters' *Mondo Trasho*.

Now, though, with Mr. Hankey (a talking piece of it) cracking

wise on *South Park*, doodie's got to work overtime in movies to get any attention at all. It has to be flung onto the walls (see *Trainspotting*) or else accompanied by symphonic toilet-bowl thunder (maybe you *shouldn't* see *Henry Fool*).

Still, nothing—and we mean *nothing*—touches the gross-out horror of the final scene of John Waters' 1973 syrup-of-ipeacac classic, *Pink Flamingos*, when Divine makes a snack out of the real deal—fresh from a doggie's derriere.

Why, oh, why, did Waters do it? "You had an audience that believed they had seen everything," he says of the scene many rate as the all-time grossest. "I was trying to make them laugh at their ability to still be shocked." Ha-ha, ugh.

## HURLS, HURLS, HURLS!



THE *SOUTH PARK* KIDS DO IT. A FAT KID in the upcoming movie *Simon Birch* does too. And, of course, there's buckets of it in *Henry Fool* and *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*.

In fact, throwing up has been a relief for moviemakers since before *The Exorcist* ("Ingmar Bergman made vomit chic," claims Waters). And while the blueberry pie barf-athon in 1986's *Stand by Me* is memo-

rable, it is the rotund Mr. Creosote (he of the "weffer thin mint") in Monty Python's 1983 comedy epic *The Meaning of Life* who remains the keeking king. "People puke," notes Trey Parker, who calls the scene his all-time favorite gross-out, "but not like *that*." Vomit also has a surprise factor, so even though chunks have flown in *Heathers*, *Blood Simple*, *Eating Raoul*, *Caddyshack*, and elsewhere, it still seems, er, fresh. "Vomit hasn't been done to death in the movies," says Waters. "It's also the cheapest special effect ever: a can of creamed corn, and presto! The whole audience is flipping out. No computers needed."

## GOING, GOING...GOING



IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT WHEN BEN Stiller takes a whiz in *There's Something About Mary*, he's connecting with a cinematic tradition that goes back to *A Clockwork Orange*, not to mention Jerry Lewis' *The Disorderly Orderly*. And while everyone from Gene Wilder (*The Frisco Kid*) to Carrey (the frozen pee scene with Jeff Daniels in *Dumb and Dumber* is a classic) has let it rip for laughs on screen, the prince of pee is Austin Powers, whose 52-second tee-tee after his long cryogenic nap was the genre's golden

moment. Even *Beavis and Butt-head* creator Mike Judge thought it got a little out of hand. "You don't really want to see anybody peeing," he says. "It's a private thing. You do it alone. And that's probably why there's something really funny about the scene. I think there's something primal in peeing that gets to people. My kids went to the zoo for the first time, and the thing they remember more than anything was that the elephant went pee-pee for a really, really long time."

## DIRECTOR'S CUT



H, THE PAINS MOVIEMAKERS BEAR FOR A few laughs!

The Three Stooges bonked one another on the head. So did Abbott and Costello. The *Naked Gun* movies had more hits than the Gambino family.

So when Stiller gets a fish hook snagged in his cheek (or, worse, his manhood snagged in his pants), and when the *BASEketball* players nail fans with fastballs, there's a rich history behind it.

Nobody got bigger laughs from comedic cutups, though, than Monty Python. The famous "just a flesh wound" scene in 1975's *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*—in which a brave



### LIFE OF THE POTTY

*Saddles'* camp humor (1); a head-turning performance in *The Exorcist* (2); getting down in *Trainspotting* (3); Divine is anything but pretty in *Pink* (4); keeping abreast in *Sex* (5)



# THAT STINKING FEELING

IT SEEMS SO OBVIOUS. Film is a feast for the eyes and ears—why not the nose? Imagine smelling Rick's cigarette in *Casablanca* or the Italian feast of *Big Night*. What we have, though, is an array of aromatic horrors from shock maestro John Waters.

The year was 1981. The movie was *Polyester*. The method was the trademarked Odorama. Waters, the director who had made heavenly history with *Pink Flamingos* eight years earlier, drew his inspiration from director-producer William Castle's gimmick films of the '50s and '60s and the *Smell-O-Vision* from the obscure 1960 Mike Todd-produced stinker *Scent of Mystery*. "A critic had said, 'If you see 'John Waters' on a marquee, hold your nose,'" says the director. "So I made a movie that *really* stank." That it did, as Waters' drag-queen muse Divine and her crude brood whipped up a smelly smorgasbord that included old sneakers, fish, and, of course, gas.

Worried that the scent-producing 3M Co., which had created children's scratch-and-sniff products, would turn up its nose at him, Waters says he placed orders for "PG smells." "We couldn't say, 'We'd like a million farts,'" recalls the director. "We'd say, 'a million rotten eggs.' They had a library of smells; some we used, some we mixed, some they made for us." Scratch-and-sniff cards with numbers that corresponded to on-screen fume-filled scenes were given to moviegoers, who responded surprisingly well. Waters remembers seeing an audience laugh when they got a whiff: "It was an incredible cinematic high."

Despite a 1993 laserdisc edition of *Polyester* that included cards, why hasn't Odorama wafted back? "It's hard enough to get theater owners to pay for indie films—try adding Odorama," Waters says. Still, he enthuses, "I got to see audiences pay to smell s---. It's a scatological world." —Joe Neumaier

knight keeps battling even after losing one arm, then the other, then both legs—is as sharp today as a bonus set of Ginsu knives: "What's funny about it," says Matt Stone, "is that it starts off not being funny at all, then goes past it to the point where it's so not funny it's funny again."

## BREAKOUT PERFORMANCES

**Z** ITS HAPPEN. AND UNTIL THEY FIND SOME fancy-schmancy dermatologist out there in Hollywood, bad-skin jokes will keep breaking out all over. Thanks to a nervous condition, Chris Elliott gets a pizza face with hives in *Mary* that's so gross even he couldn't bear to watch it. "I knew what [the blemishes] looked like when we put them on," he says, "but seeing them that big on screen was pretty disgusting. My wife was covering her eyes."

Bad as that is, Elliott's an OXY poster child compared with the biggest movie zit of all: the one John Belushi made of himself by spraying his costars with cafeteria food 20 years ago in *National Lampoon's Animal House*. Gross? Certainly. But also lovable. Belushi's "sweetness saved him," says Jim Abrahams, a gross-out specialist who cowrote *The Kentucky Fried Movie*, and *Airplane!*, and directed this summer's *Mafia!* "His smile lures you in, then he spits up all over you."

## SLIME TO KILL

**F**OR YEARS, SIGOURNEY WEAVER HELD ALL the titles for slimiest gross-outs, with the *Alien* movies and *Ghostbusters*. This summer, the Farrelly brothers may just goop their way past her in the slime pantheon, with one of the raunchiest (and funniest) uses of a polymer and K-Y jelly in movie history. In a scene that's already giving *There's Something About Mary* cult status, Ben Stiller gets a particularly personal gooey substance (and one not normally seen outside X-rated movies) stuck on his ear. Mistaking it for hair gel, Cameron Diaz uses it to give her bangs a lift. The MPAA let the scene slip past (sexual comedy seems to get an R; sexual titillation, an NC-17), but even Farrelly knew it might be a risk. "Cameron was nervous about the scene," he says. "It's a potential career ender."

Of course, once you've put this particular brand of goo on somebody's ear, is there really any place left to go with gross-outs? Trey Parker thinks there's plenty of stretching room, as long as the public stays squeamish. "As soon as we advance into beings evolved enough to speak freely about farts and barf and anuses," he says, "this stuff won't be funny anymore and we'll move on to higher-minded topics. Until then, we're just capitalizing on America's immaturity." ■ (Additional reporting by Andrew Essex and Tricia Laine)

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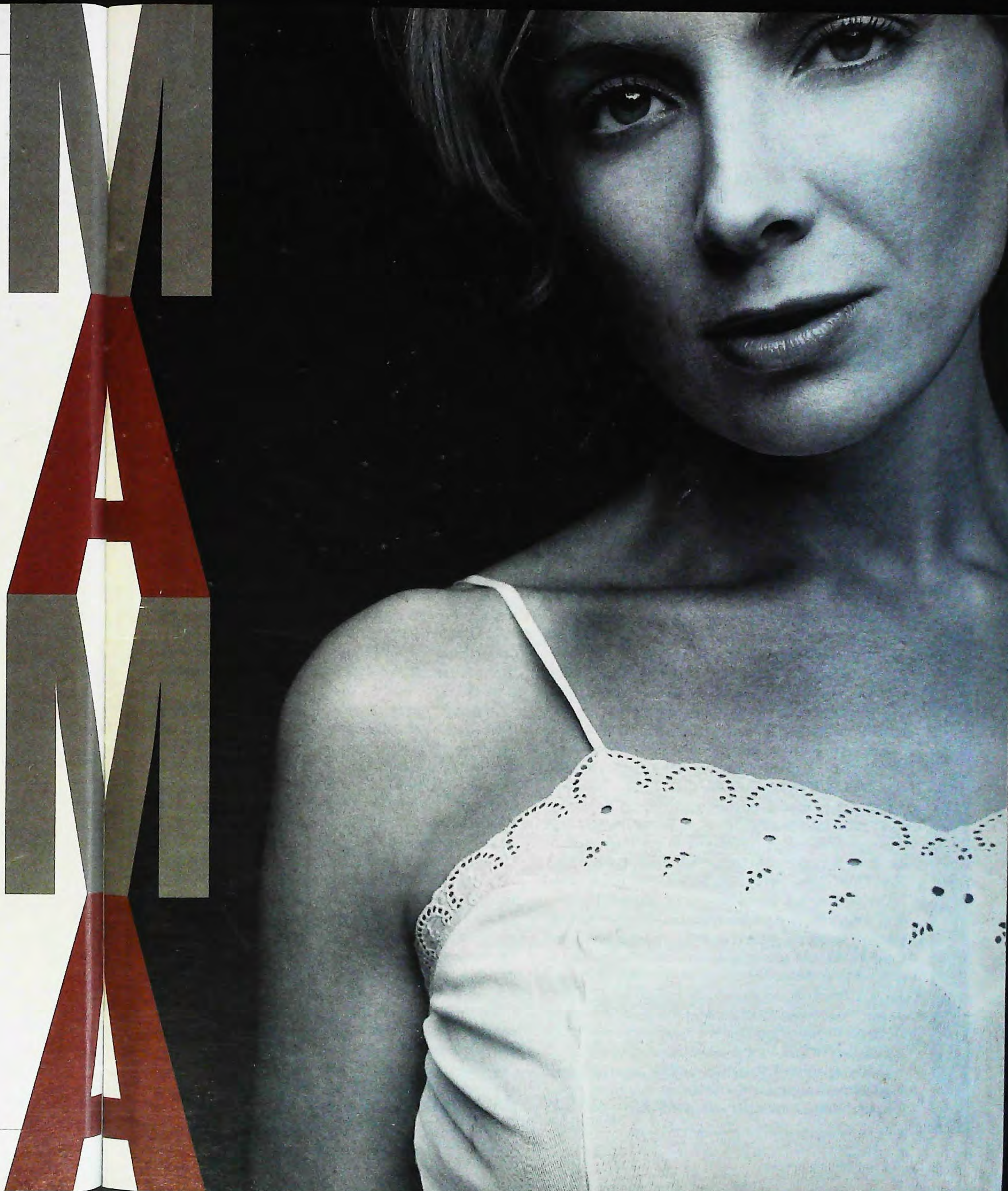
BY STEVE DALY

# » Don't Tell

EIGHT TIMES A WEEK IN BROADWAY'S smash revival of *Cabaret*, Natasha Richardson evokes a moment of overwhelming misery as Sally Bowles, the Weimar-era Berlin chanteuse whose fast life of cocaine and coitus is interrupted by an unwanted pregnancy—most probably the result of a liaison with a bisexual roommate played by John Benjamin Hickey. Near the end of the show, Richardson-as-Sally walks shakily onto the stage and reveals that she has had an abortion. She paints an unflinching portrait of denial, regret, and despair: the knocking knees, the tremulous voice, the vacant stare. ♦ “I wanted to find out what it would’ve been like, what the health risks would have been, and the pain level,” says Richardson, who tracked down a contact whose father performed abortions during that time, and soaked up stories about the emotional and physical perils. But not all of Richardson’s preparation works from the outside in. Her Tony-winning reinterpretation of Sally Bowles (hardly the glamour-puss rendered by Liza Minnelli in the 1972 movie) has loose

but unmistakable parallels to her own life as well. ♦ Given the five-year marriage of her mother, Vanessa Redgrave, to film director Tony Richardson, who died of complications from the AIDS virus in 1991, there’s something strikingly nervy in Natasha’s nightly exploration of the limits of gay-straight unions. She says her family history “resonates in all sorts of ways, some of which I’m aware of, some of which I’m not. I mean, my dad never said to me, ‘I’m gay,’ or ‘I’m bisexual.’ Yet it was never a hidden thing. I don’t know, is that denial or total openness?” ♦ As an actress, Richardson has always gravitated toward the dark side—like Paul Schrader’s 1988 biopic, *Patty Hearst*, in which she spent much of her time blindfolded and at gunpoint, and 1991’s *The Comfort of Strangers*, as a woman caught in a sadomasochistic endgame. “It’s the light, bright parts I have to work at,” says Richardson, 35, nestling into a pretheater lunch at one of the few Manhattan restaurants that allow her to light up her treasured Vogue cigarettes. “It’s weird, but where I’m comfortable go-

SHE TOTED A GUN IN **PATTY HEARST** AND TRAMPS ABOUT IN HER TONY AWARD-WINNING PORTRAYAL OF SALLY BOWLES IN **CABARET**. NOW VANESSA’S DAUGHTER **NATASHA RICHARDSON** TAKES A SURPRISINGLY LIGHTEARTED TURN IN DISNEY’S **THE PARENT TRAP**.









# KIDS SLAY the DARNDEST THINGS



**MGM WATCHED HELPLESSLY AS MIRAMAX MADE A KILLING WITH ITS SCREAM FLICKS. NOW, WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM THE X-PHILES, THE STUDIO TAKES ITS OWN STAB AT THE LUCRATIVE GENERATION-HEX AUDIENCE WITH DISTURBING BEHAVIOR.** **BY DAVID HOCHMAN**



IF YOU WANT TO KNOW HOW TO MAKE A TEENAGE horror movie, hang out in the lunchroom of Cradle Bay High. Everything's in place. The pretty cheerleaders in shrunken sweaters. The brooding, studly guy. The janitor who looks like he's out for blood. And the director frantically calling his producer on a borrowed StarTAC.

You don't need to be a whiz in calculus to figure out what's going on here on the Vancouver set of MGM's *Disturbing Behavior*. Miramax made \$320 million worldwide with its first two films in the *Scream* trilogy; now every studio worth its weight in retractable butcher's knives wants to go howling for dollars. On Aug. 5, Miramax lets slash-happy Michael Myers loose for the seventh *Halloween*. In October, Columbia releases *John Carpenter's Vampires*, about a Vatican-organized anti-Dracula squad, and Universal unleashes the evil Chucky doll on an L.A. killing spree in *Bride of Chucky*. And shooting just wrapped on *Scream* scribe Kevin Williamson's next shriek-fest, *Killing Mrs. Tingle*, about four high school students who plot to kill their teacher.

"The scariest thing about making a horror movie these days," *Behavior* director David Nutter says, "is making sure yours is out before everybody else's."

Timing isn't everything, of course, and spending a few hours on the *Disturbing Behavior* set is like reading Cliffs Notes for Hollywood Horror 101. Here's a quick review. And you will be tested....

**C'MON, GET SEXY!** Load your cast with good-looking young people. Since Leo's not available, get a guy like James Marsden to play lead hunk. No matter that his biggest role to date was in *The Nanny*; girls will swoon and say he looks like Tom Cruise 15 years ago. "Two minutes ago, it seems like I was having my own high school identity crisis," Marsden says. "I didn't know whether to hang out with the jocks or my fellow geeks in the musicals."

For the female lead, it helps to have a household name (in households with 16-year-olds). Someone like Katie Holmes, star of *Dawson's Creek* (written by Kevin Williamson—yesss!). It's also smart to get a James Dean-type character played by someone like Nick Stahl, with highfalutin credits like Terrence Malick's upcoming WWII film, *The Thin Red Line*. He'll draw the disenfranchised, the outsiders, the misfits (i.e., teenagers). Let him utter pensive thoughts to visiting reporters like: "Most teenage scripts read like they were written by people who forgot what it's like to be a teen. I know. I'm 18." Make this kid the psychological center of the film.

**KNOW YOUR TEENS!** Make sure you have all teen subcultures covered. Today the cafeteria is packed with all sorts: skateboarders in baggy pants. Whiz kids with tattered copies of Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*. Jocks. Ravers. Punks. Freaks. Explains Holmes: "Everybody in high school wears a mask of some kind. It helps them play well with others."

When it comes to villains, play up every adolescent insecurity and make the bad guys the peppiest, happiest, best-looking bunch in the room. Here, they're the Blue Ribbons, a frighteningly chipper group of picture-perfect teens whose idea of fun involves bake sales and car washes. Never mind that an evil Cradle Bay doctor has surgically removed their negative impulses and sexual urges; these kids are still totally annoying. Says Marsden, "They're, like, the scariest people you could ever meet."

**WHAT COMPETITION?** No matter how much blood is spilled or creepiness unearthed in your script, *never* discuss the competition. If a reporter brings up *Scream*, laugh nervously, as producer Jon Shestack does, then align your film with more-classic

works. "This movie's closer to *Rebel Without a Cause*," Shestack says. "It's in the tradition of that, and of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *The Stepford Wives*. People will call this *Scream 2.5*, but it isn't. Really." Then again, you might want to take *Scream* head-on. "That's more of a slasher film," says Holmes. "It's written cleverly, but this is probably more realistic. You don't come across killers with knives, you come across people who mess with your mind. That's actually scarier."

**IF ALL ELSE FAILS, WORK THE X-FILES ANGLE!** We are in Vancouver, and Nutter's directed more than a dozen *X-Files* episodes here, including the riveting "Ice" episode. Director of photography John Bartley is an X vet too, as is Mark Snow, the guy who composed the film's eerie music. So *Disturbing Behavior* has a good chance of looking and sounding familiar to the millions of Mulder and Scully fans out there, right? If that sounds like a stretch, try to make a convincing argument. "Hey," Nutter says with a bit of a smirk. "Everyone's looking for aliens, but I keep telling people the aliens among us are the teenagers. Parents can't talk to their kids anymore; they don't understand them. They can't deal with them. They can't get them to do what they want. If people are looking for 'the truth,' maybe they need to be getting closer with their kids." Or maybe they just need to take their kids to see *Disturbing Behavior*. After all, it's rated R. ■



WHERE THE GHOULS ARE Holmes and Marsden (on the set and on the run) are picture-perfect





**MORNING SHIFT**  
(Clockwise from left) McRee,  
Gibson, Newman, and Lunden

Heard the one about the morning news show that took a nosedive in the ratings? Trouble is, no one's laughing—least of all the folks at the once top-ranked **GOOD MORNING AMERICA**. By **JOE FLINT**

# COMEDY OF ERRORS

» **GOOD MORNING AMERICA** WEATHERMAN Spencer Christian unwittingly summed it up during an early-July telecast. A stuttering fit was preventing him from making a smooth segment transition. After repeated attempts to spit out the scripted words, Christian finally abandoned the effort with a frustrated "I give up."

You could almost hear the collective sighs of agreement at ABC and parent company Disney. With ratings in free fall (the show slipped 14 percent in the last year, averaging 3.8 million viewers), and new hosts Kevin Newman and Lisa McRee enduring regular whippings from TV critics, there are very few good mornings at *GMA*. The show has now slid so far, even CBS' perennial basement dweller *This Morning* is boasting of closing the gap. And as if to add insult to injury, Christian really did give up, announcing a move to a San Francisco station.

That leaves movie critic Joel Siegel as *GMA*'s most familiar face (a man, ironically enough, who is frequently mistaken for his chief rival, the *Today* show's Gene Shalit).

Of course, any confusion with NBC's seemingly unstoppable juggernaut might not be bad. *Today* averages 6.1 million viewers (spectacular morning numbers), and hosts Katie Couric and Matt Lauer are trumpeted as the best morning news team ever. Heck, even weatherman Al Roker's a national treasure.

Was there ever a time when *Today* wasn't No. 1? Indeed—and therein lies *GMA*'s great hope. Scroll back to 1994 for a very different picture. *GMA* was enjoying a four-year winning streak; it had also been No. 1 during much of the '80s. NBC's struggle at the time was not unlike *GMA*'s today: oil-and-water cohosts—Bryant Gumbel and Jane Pauley—then a shaky transition from Pauley to Deborah Norville to Katie Couric. But by '96, Couric was clicking, Gumbel was leaving,



and *Today* was trouncing *GMA*.

Let's not give Couric too much credit, though; ABC deserves plenty. In 1995, the net moved *GMA* from its entertainment to its news division, and some ex-staffers will tell you that was the critical misstep. Then-news president Boone Arledge, they say, fell asleep at the wheel, refusing to realize *GMA*'s slide. By the time he made changes, it was too little

too late: Many believe aging cohosts Joan Lunden, now 47, and Charles Gibson, 55, should've been replaced years before their '97 and '98 exits, and that Gibson should have gone first.

But Arledge didn't just mismanage the talent; he fumbled content. Case in point: TWA Flight 800. Here was the perfect chance for his expertise to drive the show. NBC certainly saw the opportunity: After the July '96 explosion, Gumbel was immediately pulled from the Atlanta Olympics and sent to the scene of the disaster. Lunden and Gibson remained studio-bound. "It was the lowest day ever," says a former *GMA*er.

"In hindsight, we should've gone back five or seven years to make changes in the show," says ABC News president David Westin, who took over the news division's day-to-day operations in June. Although Westin won't take shots at his predecessor (now ABC News chairman), he acknowledges *GMA*'s unnecessarily awkward switch from entertainment to news: "I do not believe news had a clear idea of the show's direction. There were significant problems in the integration. *GMA* people were resistant to the news people, and the news people were resistant to the *GMA* people." As for replacing Lunden and Gibson: "You had a situation where you knew it was time [for them] to move on, but there were no real candidates."

The result? Open and highly publicized auditions for their jobs while they were still working. Newsreader Elizabeth Vargas was a natural candidate for Lunden's chair; many speculated she was being groomed to host when she jumped from NBC to *GMA* in 1996. But research is said to have revealed that women disliked her—she was simply too sexy for morning. She was also, according to several sources, a prima donna. When negative stories were planted—most likely by a *GMA* insider—about her "temperament and vanity" (according to a June 1997 Liz Smith column), she was packed off to *PrimeTime Live*.

Other candidates included Deborah Roberts, Cynthia McFadden, Willow Bay (wife of ABC president Bob Iger, and now a cohost of *NewsStand: CNN & Entertainment Weekly*), and Los Angeles' KABC anchor Lisa McRee, a Lunden look-alike.

Not long after McRee's appointment, Gibson decided he was leaving. Tom Bergeron, ex-host of *Fox After Breakfast*, and new *GMA* newsman Kevin Newman battled it out for Gibson's spot during trial substitutions; Bergeron now acknowledges he and McRee were "chemistry-challenged."



RED SKY AT MORNING There's rough weather ahead for ABC's Westin

Chemistry-challenged is an apt description for *GMA*, which continues to struggle for a discernible personality. Producers quibble over Newman's glasses (worries that he looked too nerdy now have him specs-free) when they should be addressing bigger issues—like the show's misguided follow-the-leader strategy. For example, when *Today* got a ratings spike in 1994 from its move to the

fishbowl on the ground floor of 10 Rockefeller Plaza, *GMA* countered with its own new sets, with disastrous results. "At the time that *GMA* should have gotten more intimate, sets got huge and distant," says one former exec producer.

*GMA* is now planning to move to its own fishbowl-like studio in Disneyfied Times Square. However, in typical fashion, it seems not quite fully baked. The plan, according to exec producer Shelley Lewis, is to have a two-level studio: Anchors will sit on the second floor as passersby are ushered onto the ground floor to "have a cup of coffee and stand inside a protected environment." Sounds almost as much fun as a bus station. Originally, *GMA* hoped to debut the set in late '98; the recently announced yearlong delay may be a blessing in disguise.

*Today* undoubtedly lucked out with Lauer and Couric: They have a natural and appealing rapport (developed, it should be noted, over a couple of years), the reporting chops to deliver harder news, plus a wholesome sex appeal that attracts younger viewers without threatening older ones. Furthermore, the producers understand a.m. demos: More men watch the first hour, which features harder news stories; softer segments escalate in the second hour, when women dominate. *GMA*'s pacing, by contrast, seems to have no rhyme or reason. But then, neither does the show's mind-boggling decision to hire ancient *New York Post* gossip columnist Cindy Adams.

Who is *GMA* looking to attract? The most desirable morning demo is adults 18-to-49 (47 percent of *Today*'s audience; 43 of *GMA*'s). Newman, 39, and McRee, 36, would certainly lure more of them than Connie Chung, 51, whose name is circulating as a possible replacement (wild rumors and troubled shows go hand in hand, but insiders think the Chung scuttlebutt is far-fetched). Westin says he believes in Newman and McRee, though he's obviously keeping his options open: "In the next six months, we need to be able to say, 'This is our show and we believe in it,' or we have to take a hard look at what we're doing."

In the meantime, *GMA*'s hosts would do well to master the morning-show interview (asking tough questions with a smile) and work on that chemistry. On the plus side: Newman's as fast on his feet as Couric or Lauer; McRee's initial iciness is thawing. And both possess that rarest of TV commodities: patience. "These skills take time to learn," says McRee. Until then, adds Newman, "I've stopped looking at the ratings." ■

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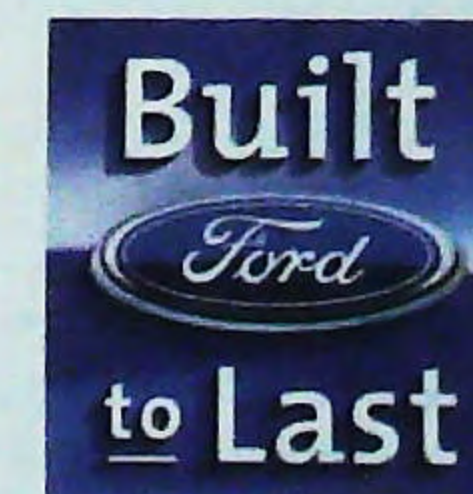


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# REVIEWS

A CRITICAL LOOK AT THIS WEEK IN ENTERTAINMENT



## Art of the Deal

Kevin Spacey tries to defuse Samuel L. Jackson in *The Negotiator*, a fiery showcase for two conversing all-stars. by Owen Gleiberman

NO OTHER CONTEMPORARY actor can make his thoughts burn with the white heat of Samuel L. Jackson. By now, we've grown accustomed to his musically contained fury, the way his words rocket forth in a threatening yet mellifluous mock singsong. What continues to make Jackson such a highly combustible performer, though, is the nearly

physical joy he takes in the bullet spray of ideas. *Logic* is sexy to him. He's never more alive than when he's questioning others—his great coffee-shop showdown near the end of *Pulp Fiction* was like a scuzz-underworld version of a Platonic dialogue—yet through some fusion of will,

**The Negotiator**  
STARRING  
Samuel L. Jackson  
Kevin Spacey  
RATED R  
139 MINUTES

bravado, and sheer stubborn funk, he never deigns to question (which is to say, doubt) himself. His logic is a machine gun pointed directly at you.

In *The Negotiator* (Warner Bros.), Jackson has what is probably his juiciest role since *Pulp Fiction* as Danny Roman, a hostage ne-

gotiator with the Chicago police force who can outmaneuver the most volatile spur-of-the-moment abductors. Danny is fearless; he'll stare directly down the barrel of a maniac's gun if that's what it takes to disarm a situation. His true weapon, however, is that he's a master of the rules of engagement—a virtuoso of psychological gamesmanship. He knows how to stroke and placate, to break down a criminal's defenses and win his trust through poker-faced deception.

Interviewed on the nightly news after a daring rescue,

**TALKING POINTS** Jackson and Spacey go head-to-head

Danny comes off like the star athlete of the SWAT team (he speaks cooly about teamwork but grabs all the credit anyway). He's about to be undermined, though, by his nose for truth. When Danny's partner uncovers a conspiracy to rip off the police-pension fund, he gets shot to death, and Danny is framed for the murder. Destined, it appears, for jail, he bursts into the office of the Internal Affairs chief (J.T. Walsh) he believes masterminded the plot and ends up taking him hostage, along with the chief's assistant and a couple of bystanders. The tables are turned; the negotiator is now hostage taker. But he's still in control. Demanding a negotiator of his own, a distant colleague named Chris Sabian (Kevin Spacey), whom he thinks he already has psyched out (actually, Sabian is as wily as he is), Danny attempts to use the hair-trigger manipulations of a hostage crisis to smoke out the real killer.

Directed by the 28-year-old F. Gary Gray, who made the vividly scruffy inner-city fables *Friday* (1995) and *Set It Off* (1996), *The Negotiator* is a clever B-movie synthesis of *The Fugitive*, *Dog Day Afternoon*, and *Die Hard*. I call it a B movie because the characters don't have much texture; they're all but defined by the pressure-cooker situation in which they find themselves. Watching Danny rattle and improvise, we never feel, as we did with Al Pacino's Sonny in *Dog Day Afternoon*, that we're witnessing the fraught climax to an already messy and tangled existence. Nevertheless, *The Negotiator*, once it gets going (there's a rather lengthy prosaic setup), is a satisfyingly tense

and booby-trapped thriller about the meeting of two relentless minds.

Jackson makes Danny as quippy and righteous as Bruce Willis or Kurt Russell, but he also gives him a lethally short fuse, a glimmer of unstable rage that helps propel the film past the demagogic shallowness of most big-budget suspense thrillers. Danny knows that his ruse will work only if the people on the other side believe that he's capable of anything. As his deadpan antagonist, Spacey teases us with his smooth, cultivated indifference only to cut against it. Sabian has to pretend not to give a damn about what happens to Danny, even after he starts to.

The two actors are as focused as chess wizards, so it's no surprise that the film's tensions pop out through its sideline characters. Paul Giamatti, as a credit-card fraud artist who is one of the hostages, has the gnashing comic goofiness of a sleazy gopher. Here, as in his great Pig Vomit turn in *Private Parts*, he advances a new screen type: the cussed, let-it-all-hang-out nerd. And the late J.T. Walsh, in his penultimate film role, shows yet again why he was such a peerless character actor. As the devious, squirmy Niebaum, he seems to be basting in corruption, anxiety, and contempt. Just about everyone in *The Negotiator* is either blowing off steam or holding it in, and that's the movie's chief pleasure. The action is really a pipeline into audience fantasies—of restraint and release, of hot-blooded aggression made cool. **B+**

## REELWORLD

This week in Hollywood by Jeff Gordinier

■ **A PIECE OF THE PI** Critics have hailed Darren Aronofsky's indie thriller *π* as one of the most original films of the year. But could *π*—the story of Max, a math whiz who studies numbers in an overheated Manhattan apartment crammed with computers—be a little less original than it looks? In 1992 *The New Yorker* published a piece by Richard Preston, author of *The Hot Zone*, called "The Mountains of Pi," a profile of two math whizzes who study numbers in an overheated Manhattan apartment crammed with computers. Aronofsky doesn't credit the article in his film, but he admits that he read it—"That was sort of an influence for Max's character," he says—and that he interviewed the Chudnovsky brothers, the duo at the heart of Preston's piece. "I basically took a little bit of that reality and fantasized it as much as possible," the filmmaker says. "None of their lives are really in it.... I took reality and turned it into cyberpunk." So far, Preston hasn't seen *π* and declines to comment.



ARONOFSKY

■ **LEAPIN' (OVER THE) LIZARD** It seems like every summer flick "borrows" something—a line, an image—from a Steven Spielberg movie, be it *Jaws* or *Jurassic Park*. *Godzilla*, for example, had more cribs than a maternity ward. (Watch how those baby *Godzillas* dent steel doors, raptor-style.) But just because *Godzilla* director Roland Emmerich saw *Jurassic Park*, don't expect Spielberg to return the favor. "The only *Godzilla* I saw was the one with Raymond Burr cut into the Japanese version," Spielberg says. "I purposely stayed away from seeing *Godzilla*, because I didn't want to get anything between me and my memory of my favorite *Godzilla* movie of all time."


■ **FURTHERMORE** The lead in Paramount's adaptation of Frank McCourt's memoir, *Angela's Ashes*—which was to be Liam Neeson until he dropped out—may be filled by *The Full Monty*'s Robert Carlyle. ■

EYES WIDE SHUT Spielberg



ILLUSTRATION BY TIM BOWER





CHILDREN OF THE SCORN Rebellious students Marsden and Holmes search for the root of *Disturbing Behavior*

## Class Warfare

Creepy teens trade high school angst for murderous anger in *Disturbing Behavior*

IN A VIRTUOSO MONOLOGUE early in the subversive, spawn-of-*Scream* teen thriller ***Disturbing Behavior*** (MGM), pasty outcast Gavin Strick (Nick Stahl, full of star potential) describes the unofficial seating plan of the Cradle Bay High School cafeteria to Steve Clark (James Marsden), a new kid who exudes just enough alienation to suggest that Gavin has spotted a brother in anomie. Seconded by a "pigmentally challenged" albino sidekick (otherworldly Chad E. Donella), Gavin identifies the jocks and the computer nerds, the auto-shop habitués and the punks who have constituted high school society for all eternity. Indeed, Gavin nails each subset's music and drug habits with such deadpan verve that it's clear he'd make a great scriptwriter for a WB TV project someday—if he doesn't first fall prey to the curse of the Blue Ribbons.

They're the highly motivated jock-and-cheerleader set, the overachieving goody-goodies who study hard and run

bake sales. Inspired by school psychiatrist Dr. Caldicott (Bruce Greenwood), they're model suburban youth—except when they go on murderous rampages. "Adolescence is a minefield," the creepy shrink warns the parents of potential recruits to his motivational workshops. He should know:

His *spécialité* is tinkering with grenade-like teenage brains.

In addition to all it owes *Scream*, *Disturbing Behavior* blithely draws sincerest-form-of-flattery inspiration from olders and betters including *The Stepford Wives*, *Village of the Damned*, and, heck, even Sherlock Holmes. (There's a mortal struggle at a waterfall.)

The *X-Files* training of director David Nutter (making his feature debut) and cinematographer John Bartley reveals

itself in the movie's overarching tone of sardonic darkness, its delight in light and shadow. And credit goes to the WB's *Dawson's Creek* for popularizing the tough-cutie charms of Katie Holmes: As Gavin's chum who strikes sparks with Steve, Goth-chic in a nose ring, blood-red lipstick, and a midriff-skimming top, she's a junior dish—what Girl Power looks like when it cuts class.

But for all its influences, *Disturbing Behavior* establishes a semi-real, semi-supernatural, part-mocking, part-commiserating genre of its own—a state so precarious that those expecting chillier frights or warmer laughs may be disappointed. Conformity, it counsels, is the work of the devil, operating in cahoots with parents who sell out their kids. But kids, it also suggests, can be as creepy as zombies, as bitter as inmates, as bad as vermin. You want school spirit? *I've got your school spirit right here. Ka-blamm.* **B+** —Lisa Schwarzbaum

### Disturbing Behavior

STARRING  
James Marsden  
Katie Holmes  
RATED R  
84 MINUTES

### CRITICAL MASS

Here's how a sampling of critics and movie audiences from across the country grade 10 current releases.

	CINEMASCOPE Audience Score: 100% (U.S.)	ROGER EBERT Score & Count	GENE SISKEL Score & Count	JAM BERNARD High-Roller Score	CARRIE RICKEY High-Roller Score	MIKE CLARK Score & Count	ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY	CRITICS' AVERAGE
<b>Armageddon</b> TOUCHSTONE	A-	D	C+	D	C-	D	C	C-
<b>Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss</b> TRIMARK	—	—	—	C+	—	—	B+	B
<b>Dr. Dolittle</b> 20TH CENTURY FOX	A-	B	D+	C	B	D	B+	C+
<b>Lethal Weapon 4</b> WARNER BROS.	A-	C	D	D	—	C+	C	C-
<b>Madeline</b> TRISTAR	A-	B-	C+	B	B-	B	C	B-
<b>The Mask of Zorro</b> TRISTAR	A-	B	C	C+	B	B	B	B-
<b>Polish Wedding</b> FOX SEARCHLIGHT	—	C+	C	C	—	—	C	C
<b>Saving Private Ryan</b> DREAMWORKS	—	B+	A	A+	A	A+	A	A
<b>Small Soldiers</b> DREAMWORKS	B+	C+	C	B-	C+	C+	C+	C+
<b>There's Something About Mary</b> 20TH CENTURY FOX	B+	B	B+	B	B+	D+	C	B-

>> Critical Mass Interactive: Grade the movies yourself at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com) <<

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FRIDAY, JULY 31

MEN'S  
FIGURE SKATING

W/

TODD  
ELDREDGE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1

WOMEN'S  
FIGURE SKATING

W/

MICHELLE  
KWAN

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2

USA vs Russia swimming dual

ALEKSANDR  
POPOV

VS

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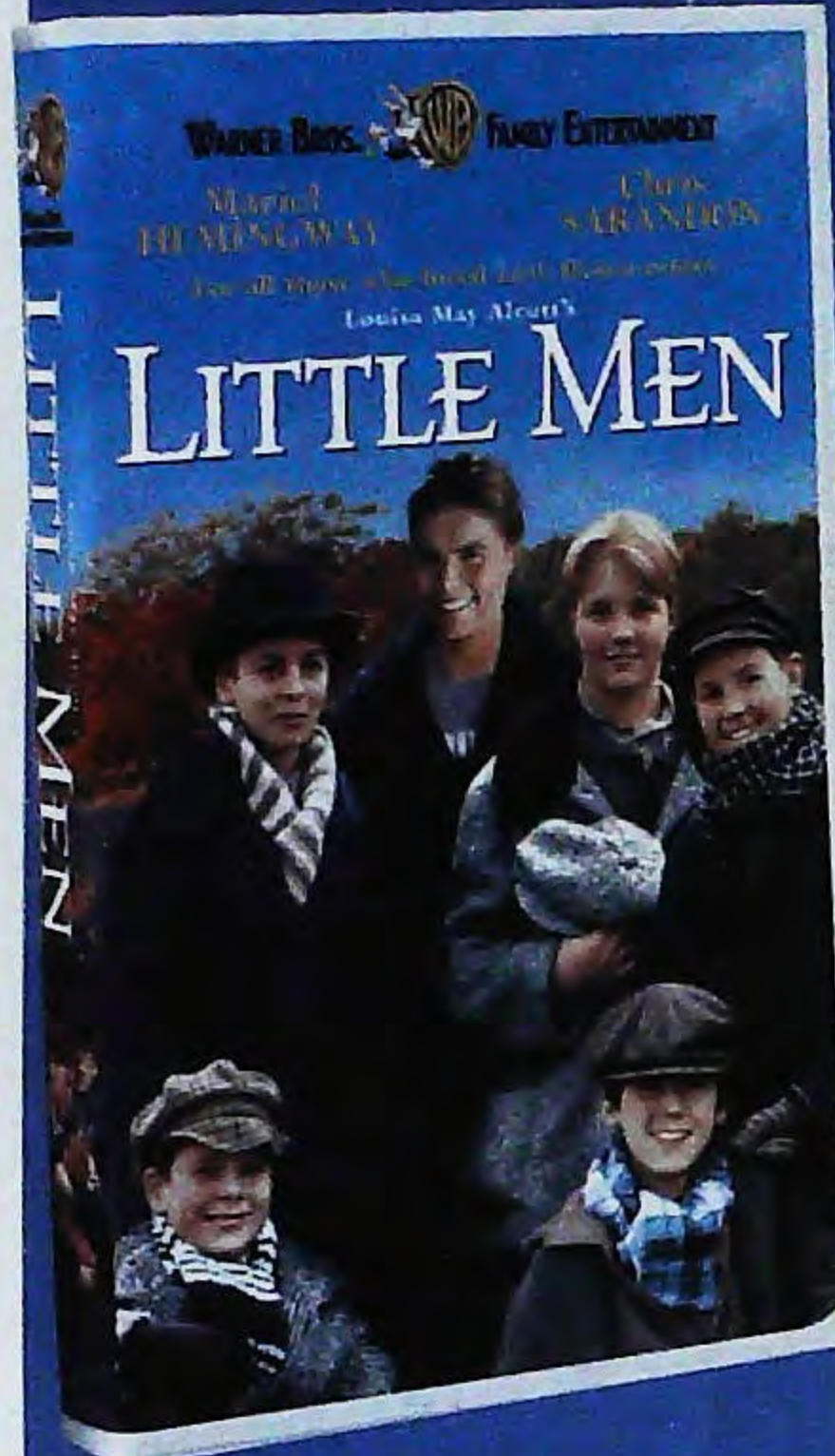




NEW ON VIDEO



WARNER BROS.  
FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT



"A Warm And  
Heartfelt Movie For The  
Whole Family..."

—BILL HOFFMAN, *New York Post*



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PG



MARRIED TO THE MOB Pasta-faced newlyweds Christina Applegate and Mohr canoodle in *Mafia!*

## La Cosa Nostril

Thumbing its nose at *The Godfather* and *Casino* (how audacious!), *Mafia!* revels in a style of parody that's ready to sleep with the fishes

THERE'S A GOOD GAG IN *Mafia!* (*Touchstone*) that the movie botches so completely it's a crime. We're at a fancy Mob wedding where the aging, white-haired patriarch, Don Cortino (Lloyd Bridges), steps onto a backyard dance floor to take a courtly spin with his daughter-in-law. As they dance, a hitman rushes up and fires round after round into the don, whose body, still standing, jerks and twitches so spasmodically that everyone assumes that the old man is simply doing the jitterbug. The musicians grin, stop the slow number they're playing, and launch into a jubilant rendition of "In the Mood," quickly followed by "Macarena." Hilarious? It might have been—that is, if we could have actually *seen* Lloyd Bridges (who died shortly after the film was completed) doing his goofy assassination dance. Instead, it's displayed in choppy bits and pieces that never add up to a slapstick epiphany.

There are a handful of laughs in *Mafia!*, but most of the movie feels oddly repressed. At this point, who really wants to see a parody of *The Godfather* anyway? What's next—*Casablanca*? *The Birth of a Nation*? Directed by Jim Abrahams, working without his former partners the Zucker brothers, *Mafia!* combines a

been-there-done-that lampoon of the mythical Corleone clichés with a slightly less moldy satire of Martin Scorsese's *Casino*. The underworld gags are limited and repetitive, without the ripely promiscuous media-age lunacy that, in a comedy like *The Naked Gun*, made you feel as if the film were tickling funny bones you never even knew existed.

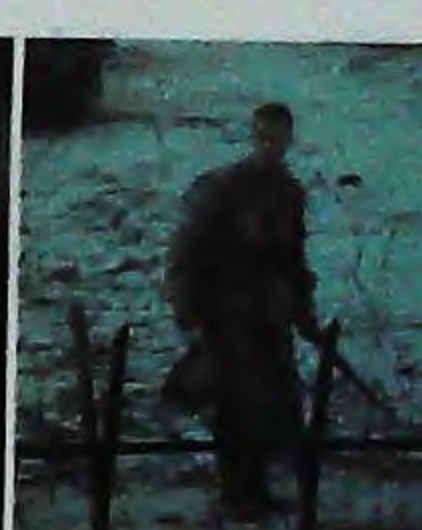
Jay Mohr, as the Michael Corleone surrogate, and Billy Burke, as his psycho-hothead brother, don't even look the part—they're like preppies clowning in a Harvard spoof—and so the film gets virtually no lift from its performers. Can you imagine, for instance, what that wedding dance of death would have looked like with Leslie Nielsen giving in to his inner anarchist? In the *Naked Gun* films, the spectacular klutziness of Nielsen's Lieut. Frank Drebin grows out of his attitude, his oblivious, befuddled soul, but in *Mafia!*, people smash into walls simply because the filmmakers thought it would be funny to see them smashing into walls. Still, when Mohr's Anthony Cortino grabs his brother's head and gives him the kiss of death, leaving a bright red smear of lipstick...well, we may all know this genre's tricks too well by now, but that doesn't mean they can't make you smile. **C**—OG

**Mafia!**

STARRING  
Jay Mohr  
Lloyd Bridges  
RATED PG-13  
86 MINUTES

## PARENTS' GUIDE

BY LOIS  
ALTER  
MARK



MOVIE TITLE	THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY	DISTURBING BEHAVIOR	THE NEGOTIATOR	THE MASK OF ZORRO	SAVING PRIVATE RYAN
WHAT IT'S ABOUT	Ex-dweeb Ted (Ben Stiller) hires a private eye (Matt Dillon) to track down the woman (Cameron Diaz) he's been obsessed with since high school.	New kid in town Steve (James Marsden) and outcast Rachel (Katie Holmes) try to discover why their fellow high school students are turning into preppy zombies.	After being framed, hostage negotiator Danny Roman (Samuel L. Jackson) takes prisoners and demands that renowned Chris Sablan (Kevin Spacey) be called in to mediate.	The original man in black (Anthony Hopkins) trains his cocky protégé (Antonio Banderas) to take over his swashbuckling duties.	During World War II, Capt. John Miller (Tom Hanks) and his squad are sent to rescue a soldier (Matt Damon) whose three brothers have been killed in action.
WILL KIDS WANT TO WATCH IT?	Yes, teens will find this raunchy comedy hysterical.	Yes. Holmes, a star of TV's <i>Dawson's Creek</i> , will lure them in to this teen version of <i>The Stepford Wives</i> .	Yes, they'll be fascinated by this suspenseful crime drama.	Yes. They'll get a kick out of this old-fashioned adventure.	Maybe, because of Hanks, Damon, and Spielberg. But those too young shouldn't enlist in this war drama.
MPAA RATING	R	R	R	PG-13	R
SEX/NUDITY	Ted's "franks and beans," masturbation, oral sex, wrinkly breasts	Implied oral sex in a car; a girl bares her breast.	None	Zorro removes the corset of a woman (Catherine Zeta-Jones) in a duel.	None
DRUGS/ALCOHOL	Ted and Mary share what may be a joint; drinking.	A kid smokes a joint; teens try to score beer.	Drinks at a birthday celebration	Some social drinking	None
VIOLENCE/SCARINESS	All in good fun, but a dog catches fire and a cop beats Ted after finding a corpse in his car.	Bloody fights; shooting; students fall to their death; a trip to an asylum.	A little girl is held at gunpoint; three fatal shootings.	Swordplay and shooting; the two Zorros carve their marks into enemies' flesh.	Ultra-gory, realistic combat scenes, filled with blood and maimed bodies
OBJECTIONABLE WORDS/PHRASES	More than 100	About 55	More than 100	Three	More than 100
WHAT'S GOOD ABOUT IT	Everyone likes Mary because she's bright, compassionate, and fun.	The message that it's best to be yourself, imperfections and all	Chris' anti-violence creed	Justice prevails.	Courage can overcome the worst horrors imaginable.
WHAT'S NOT SO GOOD	The many jokes at the expense of the mentally and physically challenged	Parents sign up their kids for mind-control experiments.	Nobody listens to Danny until he grabs a gun and takes hostages in a Chicago police building.	Children may be upset when Zorro Sr.'s wife is killed and his baby is taken from him.	The relentless violence is almost painful to watch.
APPROPRIATE AGES	15 and up	15 and up	15 and up	12 and up	17 and up

MOVIES



# The Week

Reviews by OWEN GLEIBERMAN and LISA SCHWARZBAUM

## New Releases

### BILLY'S HOLLYWOOD SCREEN KISS

(Trimark, R) With this cherry tart of a story about a likable, boy-friendless photographer (very likable Sean P. Hayes) with a crush on a dishy L.A. newcomer for whom the sexual-orientation jury is still out (Brad Rowe), writer-director Tommy O'Haver has come up with a gay, as in homosexual, romantic comedy that's also gay, as in sparkling, high-spirited, debonair. This is the fruit of a new, relaxed chapter in gay filmmaking, one in which discrimination, AIDS, psychological distress, and gender politics take a breather while attractive men make entertaining comments about movies, relationships, thissa-and-thatta. For such a teeny premise, O'Haver piles his after-dinner plate awfully high—characters living life like a Hollywood melodrama, music by Petula Clark and Nina Simone, a color palette out of an old MGM extravaganza, transvestites, general fabulousness. But, hey, have a bite, it's just dessert. **B+** —LS

### MARK TWAIN'S AMERICA IN 3-D

(Sony Pictures Classics, G) Swimming really close to the huge paddle of a steam-driven riverboat and sitting eye to eye with an extremely large jumping frog are fine, educational, Hall of Wonder-type experiences. But this new IMAX effort suffers from the same dispiriting squareness that has plagued most of the format's other 3-D movies:

Subtract the novelty of donning ungainly, futuristic goggles to experience objects leaping off the screen and you're left with a constipated classroom lecture—the efforts of a professor awed by the difficulty of running a movie projector. Here, the history lesson concerns the great American writer, who, invention buff that he was, would probably be enchanted with 3-D filmmaking, even if much of the process is wasted on photographs of him looking like a cardboard cutout posed against a museum diorama. With your eyes closed, this unimpeachably virtuous production assumes the form it might just as well have had all along: radio documentary on NPR. **C** —LS

**THE THIEF** (Stratosphere, R) In 1952, Sanya (Misha Philipchuk), a 6-year-old Russian boy with big round chipmunk eyes that look made for piercing the hearts of art-house patrons everywhere, watches as his young widowed mother (Ekaterina Rednikova) becomes involved with a handsome soldier—a smoldering, manipulative brute (Vladimir Mashkov) who winkingly describes himself as the son of Joseph Stalin. A strapping opportunist, the soldier takes the two under his wing, passing himself off as “Uncle Tolyan.” Despite his flagrant hostility and criminal loutishness, he fosters an emotional dependence that leaves young Sanya at his mercy. A 1998 Academy Award nominee for Best Foreign Language Film, *The Thief* is

meant to be a domestic allegory of life under Stalin, but the director, Pavel Chukhrai, stages scenes like a grimly furtive apparatchik. He makes Tolyan so monochromatic in his oppression, and the boy and his mother such helpless, passive lambs, that the film's obvious (if inarguable) politics never translate into active drama. **C-** —OG

## In Theaters

**ARMAGEDDON** (PG-13) In this month's will-an-asteroid-collide-with-Earth thriller, military honchos scramble to find someone to save our precious planet, and the best they can come up with is an oil driller (Bruce Willis). Watching the movie, you get the feeling that the director, Michael Bay, wants to drill the audience. **C** (#440, July 10) —OG

**BUFFALO 66** (Unrated) A grunge fable of regeneration cowritten and directed by its star, Vincent Gallo, who has the look of a born sociopath—or a born movie star: He plays Billy Brown, who emerges from prison and kidnaps the sweetly voluptuous teenage Layla (Christina Ricci), forcing her to pretend to be his wife. It's all to convince his parents (played with venomous gusto by Ben Gazzara and Anjelica Huston) that he is now a respectable person. Gallo already has the audacity and flair of a major filmmaker. **A** (#440, July 10) —OG

**DR. DOLITTLE** (PG-13) As a natty physician who's none too thrilled to find that he has the ability to talk to animals, Eddie Murphy plays straight man to a bunch of winged, furry, and raunchily funny wisenheimers. Director Betty Thomas keeps indulgence at bay in even the coarsest of comic situations. **B+** (#440, July 10) —LS



LOSERS OF THE WEEK

## Movie Stars

According to a survey by Arbitron New Media, more moviegoers are concerned with “topic or plot” than with seeing big-name actors. So, what's up with these \$20 million paydays?

WINNER OF THE WEEK

## 'Godzilla'

The much-maligned big lizard broke an attendance record in Japan, where more than half a million people saw the flick on opening day.

**LETHAL WEAPON 4** (R) Practically nothing has changed since *LW3*, except that the boys—Danny Glover and Mel Gibson, family man and trip-wired widower—really are getting too old for this s---. Stuff still blows up, absurdly and dramatically. Joe Pesci still natters. Rene Russo is back. It's cool, though, to see Hong Kong martial-arts star Jet Li whirl and kick in his American debut. And Chris Rock does some funny stand-up as Glover's future son-in-law, if stand-up is what you're after in a *Lethal* formula. **C** (#441, July 17) —LS

**MADLINE** (PG) The 12 little girls “in two straight lines” of Ludwig Bemelmans' beloved children's books have become one dull dozen in Daisy von Scherler Mayer's fizzless adaptation. British newcomer Hatty Jones, as leader of the pack, shows a worker-like spunk better adapted to the field-hockey green, while Frances McDormand adopts a broad acting-for-children style that reveals little of her gifts. Madeline-size girls may be enter-

tained enough, but adults will recognize the blandness in this pudding. **C** (#441, July 17) —LS

**THE MASK OF ZORRO** (PG-13) Anthony Hopkins and Antonio Banderas make a passionate pair of swordsmen—one the aging pulp-fiction legend, the other the hot-headed young pupil he trains to take his place in the never-ending battle for truth, justice, and the old-fashioned action-adventure way. This pleasant, deep-crimson movie anachronism from director Martin Campbell is a nostalgic treat—with a bit of unintentional Monty Python in the sneers of a ruthless Spanish villain (Stuart Wilson). **B** (#442, July 24) —LS

**π** (R) Darren Aronofsky's first feature could be a cybergeek version of *Taxi Driver*. Max (Sean Gullette), a febrile mathematics junkie, skulks through the streets, alleys, and fluorescent subway tunnels of Manhattan, obsessed with uncovering the secret number system that governs...everything. The movie's freakazoid intensity gets to you, but there's something at once cramped and show-offy in Aronofsky's refusal to even slightly vary the atmosphere of shock-corridor burnout. **B** (#441, July 17) —OG

**POLISH WEDDING** (PG-13) First-time writer-director Theresa Connelly aims for a European feel to this ethnic *All in the Family* story

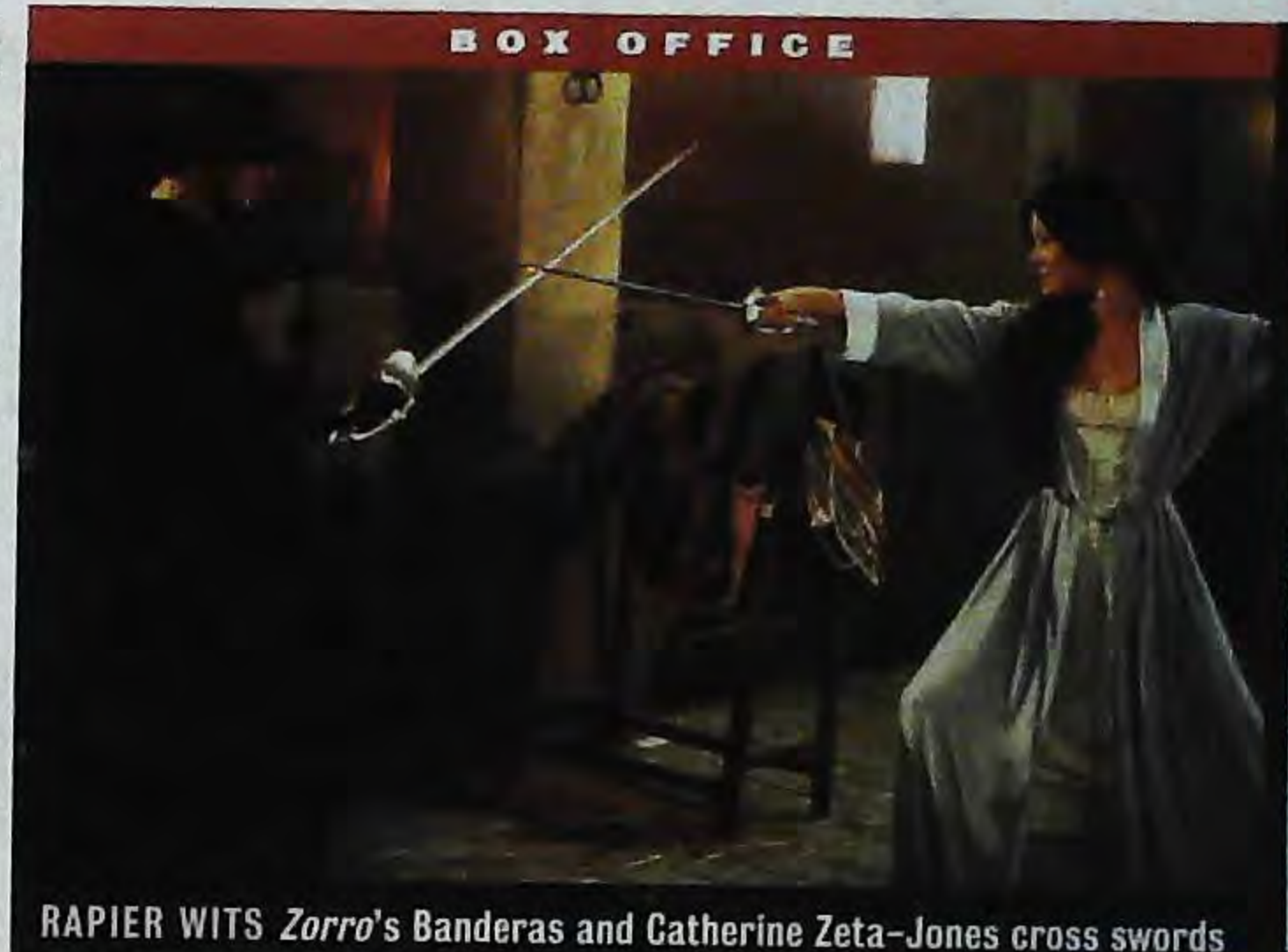
about a combustible Polish clan in Hamtramck, Mich. But she packs in too many high-concept personalities and overseasons them with too much self-conscious spiciness: The matriarch (Lena Olin) smolders in her bathrobe, the patriarch (Gabriel Byrne) sighs with moody distraction, the sons clang and bang around the house, and the rebellious daughter (Claire Danes) at the center of the hubbub taunts young men as if she were in a comic strip. **C** (#442, July 24) —LS

**SAVING PRIVATE RYAN** (R) Steven Spielberg's World War II epic is a movie of staggering virtuosity and raw lyric power, a masterpiece of terror, chaos, blood, and courage. It opens with one of the most brutal and revolutionary sequences ever filmed, as Spielberg uses the D-Day invasion to put us directly inside the consciousness of men in combat. Tom Hanks, in a beautiful performance, is Captain Miller, who leads his platoon across the Normandy countryside in search of Private Ryan (Matt Damon), the only one of four enlisted brothers who may still be alive. The dread and violence of that opening massacre haunt their every move; at the same time, Spielberg is too great a filmmaker not to make the battles thrilling in their spontaneous logistical frenzy. *Saving Private Ryan* says that only by confronting the pitiless horror of World War II can we truly know its heroism. **A** (#442, July 24) —OG

**SMALL SOLDIERS** (PG-13) The title characters are a platoon of spunky robot action figures—jut-jawed, rivet-jointed Commando Elite warriors who strut like post-punk GI Joes on steroids. Unfortunately, the director, Joe Dante (*Grem-lins*), has misplaced his zest for escalating slapstick outrage. **C+** (#441, July 17) —OG

**THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY** (R) Ted (Ben Stiller), a former high school nerd, has never gotten over his crush on Mary (Cameron Diaz), the beautiful girl who asked him to the prom. (He never made it; he got his member stuck in his zipper.) So he hires a sleazy detective (Matt Dillon) to track her down. The romantic-stalker plot is really just an excuse for the Farrelly brothers to indulge their overdeliberate brand of madcap tastelessness. There are jokes about the handicapped, gay serial killers, electroshocked dogs, and so on. You don't have to be a prude, though, to be put off by the laboriousness with which the Farrellys telegraph their taboo-smashing glee. **C** (#441, July 17) —OG

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RAPIER WITS *Zorro's* Banderas and Catherine Zeta-Jones cross swords

## 'Z' MARKS THE SPOT

IN A SUMMER packed with fancy-schmancy computer-generated celestial objects and demolition-derby car chases, *The Mask of Zorro* proved that less can indeed be more. The old-school swashbuckling adventure, starring Antonio Banderas and Anthony Hopkins, sliced its way to No. 1 with a sharp \$22.5 million, thanks to its across-the-board appeal. Apparently less appealing—in many ways—was the week's other big debut, the crude comedy *There's Something About Mary*, which rode slaphappy reviews and giggle-fit buzz to a \$17.8 million five-day tally. With its lack of comic competition, the Farrelly brothers' flick should still stick around for a bit. Meanwhile, Eddie Murphy was again inducted into the \$100 million club—twice—as both *Dr. Dolittle* and *Mulan* soared past the no-longer-so-exclusive box office milestone.

TOP 20	WEEKEND GROSS*	NO. OF SITES†	WEEKEND PER-SITE AVERAGE	WEEKS IN RELEASE	GROSS TO DATE
1 THE MASK OF ZORRO TriStar	\$22.5	2,515	\$8,957	1	\$22.5
2 LETHAL WEAPON 4 Warner Bros.	\$21.7	3,117	\$6,970	2	\$71.7
3 ARMAGEDDON Touchstone	\$16.6	3,184	\$5,211	3	\$129.1
4 THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY 20th Century Fox	\$13.7	2,186	\$6,286	1	\$17.8
5 DR. DOLITTLE 20th Century Fox	\$9.5	2,805	\$3,379	4	\$105.4
6 SMALL SOLDIERS DreamWorks	\$8.6	2,613	\$3,310	2	\$30.3
7 MULAN Walt Disney	\$4.9	2,283	\$2,152	5	\$101.3
8 MADLINE TriStar	\$4.4	1,863	\$2,352	2	\$15.3
9 THE TRUMAN SHOW Paramount	\$2.2	1,540	\$1,411	7	\$120.0
10 SIX DAYS, SEVEN NIGHTS Touchstone	\$2.1	1,416	\$1,485	6	\$67.5
11 OUT OF SIGHT Universal	\$2.0	1,430	\$1,430	4	\$33.7
12 THE X-FILES 20th Century Fox	\$2.0	1,451	\$1,381	5	\$78.3
13 TITANIC Paramount	\$1.3	867	\$1,543	31	\$590.5
14 EVEREST IMAX	\$1.1	61	\$17,221	20	\$28.4
15 A PERFECT MURDER Warner Bros.	\$0.8	947	\$896	7	\$68.0
16 HOPE FLOATS 20th Century Fox	\$0.7	653	\$1,114	8	\$56.4
17 THE HORSE WHISPERER Touchstone	\$0.5	493	\$1,111	10	\$71.6
18 CITY OF ANGELS Warner Bros.	\$0.4	604	\$644	15	\$77.5
19 THE OPPOSITE OF SEX Sony Pictures Classics	\$0.4	174	\$2,202	9	\$3.9
20 SMOKE SIGNALS Miramax	\$0.4	66	\$5,759	4	\$1.2

SOURCE: EXHIBITOR RELATIONS CO. INC. WEEKEND OF JULY 17-19 \*WEEKEND GROSS AND GROSS-TO-DATE FIGURES IN MILLIONS †INCLUDES SOME MULTISCREEN THEATERS AND PRINTS SHIPPED AS WELL AS INDIVIDUAL SITES



FORMAL ENGAGEMENT Hayes (left) and Rowe have a date with destiny in *Billy's Hollywood Screen Kiss*



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## Little Girl Lust

The much-debated new *Lolita* may be about pedophilia, but the real shock isn't perversity, it's the pedestrian interpretation. **by Ken Tucker**

AFTER MONTHS OF controversy, director Adrian Lyne's new \$58 million theatrical-film version of Vladimir

Nabokov's novel *Lolita* receives its first American wide-audience airing on cable's Showtime network. And as it turns out, this venue could not be more fit-

**SHOWTIME**  
**Lolita**  
**9-11:30 PM**  
**AUG. 2**

ting: Literal-minded, humorless, and with much rubbing-with-clothes-on sex, this *Lolita* plays like the most expensive episode of the cable net's *Red Shoe Diaries* ever made.

Yes, it's a nasty, sad little *Lolita* that Lyne has cooked up, a *Lolita* that cowers be-

fore the morally self-righteous, sexually spooked America of the late '90s. The story of professor Humbert Humbert's obsession with the bratty, tarty 14-year-old Dolores Haze—the dolorous Lolita—retains, in the script

**INCEST REPELLENT** *Lolita's* homoerotic Humbert Irons and nymphet Swain

by Stephen Schiff, many of Nabokov's scenes, a bit of his prose in the voice-over narration, but little of the sensual satire and tricky tragicomedy that makes the 1955 novel enduringly entrancing. "*Lolita* has no moral in tow," Nabokov wrote in his essay "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*," but Lyne's film has a very heavy one dragging it down: Just Say No to Nymphets.

Humbert is played by Jeremy Irons, who possesses the perfect voice for a Nabokov protagonist—ooh, that aristocratic hauteur, that velvet-cobra murmur! But un-





LOLITA DIRECTOR LYNE

fortunately, Irons' Oscar-winning portrayal of creepy Claus von Bülow in *Reversal of Fortune* will forever instantly typecast him as a perv in any movie role short of Indiana Jones, and he radiates dour decadence too quickly to dramatize what the book does so well: one man's slow descent into a hell of shame—"umber and black Humberland."

Irons' costar, the Nabokovian named Dominique Swain, 15 at the time of filming, is more effective as Lolita, although Swain often seems smarter—shrewder—than the smutty-minded dimdish Nabokov created as the ironic object of the cultivated Humbert's lust. Lyne's film is good at sketching in the plot: Humbert marries Lo's mother, Charlotte (a bland Melanie Griffith), to be nearer the child. Charlotte conveniently dies, freeing our stiff stepdaddy to take his young charge on a cross-country jaunt, tailed by another Lolita admirer, the mysterious Clare Quilty (Frank Langella, invariably shot in melodramatic darkness, with thunder rumbling).

Make no mistake: Nabokov knew that what he was writing would provoke people. As much as Tom Clancy or Jackie Susann, he wanted a stormy best-seller, a profitmaker that would free

him from teaching. "That my novel does contain various allusions to the physiological urges of a pervert is quite true," he wrote. But he also assumed a readership that could separate lucid, lubricious fiction

from hoary, how-to nonfiction—something poor Lyne cannot. And so the director of energetic eroto-romps like *9½ Weeks* and *Fatal Attraction* goes all gauzy and pious on us.

Comparisons with Stanley Kubrick's 1962 *Lolita*—with James Mason as Humbert and Peter Sellers as a Quilty far more prominent than Langella's—are inevitable. But Kubrick wasn't any gutsier than Lyne: Nabokov biographer Brian Boyd reports that Kubrick wanted "to end the film with Lolita and Humbert married, and with an adult relative's blessing!"

Having also seen the mercifully short-lived 1981 Broadway version of *Lolita*, I conclude that this story works only on the page, where the potential kiddie porn is limited to (or unleashed by) one's imagination, and where the redeeming quality of the author's writing—since, for hundreds of pages, the novel is about many things other than low lust—is allowed full rein. Nabokov wanted us to experience a demon Humbert in each of us; his *Lolita* is insinuating. Adrian Lyne, by contrast, has given us a turgid story the slang-loving, alliteration-admiring Nabokov might have called *Lolita Lite*. **C**

## ON THE AIR

The latest news from the TV beat by Joe Flint



TOUSSAINT AND POTTS

■ **CHANCE OF A LIFETIME** Comedy Central and MTV have counterprogrammed broadcast rivals with out-there animated fare (*Beavis and Butt-head*, *South Park*), but can cabled competitors with the nets on their own turf? Lifetime Television will find out next month when it premieres Big Four-like fare *Maggie* (Ann Cusack), a sitcom about a wife and mother who falls for her veterinarian

mentor; *Oh Baby* (Cynthia Stevenson, Joanna Gleason), a comedy about a single woman who decides to have a baby; and *Any Day Now* (Annie Potts, Lorraine Toussaint), a drama about two women—one white, one black—who grew up together in Birmingham, Ala., during the 1960s.

While the shows look promising, it won't be easy. For starters, the net's chosen Tuesday—arguably this fall's most competitive night (thanks in part to Fox's moving *King of the Hill* to 8 p.m.)—as a launching pad for all three new entries. There are also greater financial risks; programming broadcast-quality shows requires spending broadcast bucks—several hundred thousand dollars more per episode than the usual cable fare.

But Lifetime president and CEO Doug McCormick is counting on the increasingly conservative programming climate: "The broadcast networks have ceded so many time periods to news-magazines; they're keeping their risks down." Furthermore, unlike the Big Four, a mere mid-tuos (i.e., 2.4 million viewers) rating equals cable success. Eat your heart out, NBC.

■ **RESTORING ORDER** *Law & Order* got a little too personal for exec producer Dick Wolf last season. Plotlines included Lennie Briscoe (Jerry Orbach) confronting his daughter's death and Jamie Ross (Carey Lowell) locked in a custody battle. This season, Wolf vows a return to strictly cases. Why the shift in the first place? Wolf says many of the actors weren't under contract, and creating character cliff-hangers allowed the show to survive if cast members chose not to return. In the end, only Lowell left. She'll be replaced by *Baywatch Nights'* Angie Harmon. ■



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Carsons  
Evergreen  
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Harlem-Irving  
State Street  
Yorktown

**DALLAS**  
Foleys  
Collin Creek  
Valleyview

**DETROIT**  
Hudson's  
Oakland Mall  
Somerset Mall

**HOUSTON**  
Foleys  
Memorial City  
Willowbrook

**LOS ANGELES**  
Robinsons May  
Citicorp Plaza  
Del Amo  
West Covina  
West Los Angeles

**MIAMI**  
Burdines  
Dadeland  
Pembroke Pines  
Westland

**NEW YORK**  
Macy's  
Herald Square

**WASHINGTON**  
Hecht's  
Fair Oaks Mall  
Montgomery Mall  
Tysons Corner



If you live in one of the cities listed above, you could receive a complimentary pass for two to a special opening night screening of "The Avengers." It's your gift for trying on a Nautica Windjammer Watch at participating stores. Available starting 7/27/98 (while supplies last, no purchase necessary).



# REMOTE PATROL

Keeping a watch on TV by Bruce Fretts

**NYPD recruits Little Ricky, NewsRadio's got a Lovitz, and other fall-season face-lifts**

LEAVE IT TO STEVEN Bochco to make the riskiest casting choice of the year: picking Rick Schroder—Ricky to his fans from his preteen-idol days on *Silver Spoons*—to replace Jimmy Smits on **NYPD Blue**. Bochco knows how to generate headlines (remember the storm of controversy over *Blue*'s nudity?), and the ploy worked again. Schroder went from the where-are-they-now file to the front pages, and *Blue* flew from is-that-show-still-on to I-gotta-see-this status all over again. Admit it: You want to check out what Little Ricky looks like all grown up (and butt naked).

Schroder is the most surprising new actor joining an old show, but he's far from the only one. Another aging crime drama, **Homicide: Life on the Street**, is hoping that an infusion of fresh blood will help ease the pain of losing the

powerful Andre Braugher. Giancarlo Esposito will join the cast as the long-estranged FBI-agent son of Lieut. Al Giardello (Yaphet Kotto). Esposito's best known for his work in Spike Lee movies. Plus, he's got cop-show cred, having played Ron Eldard's partner in the short-lived but

much-loved Fox sitcom *Bakersfield P.D.* The other new addition to the *Homicide* squad, Michael Michele, has an iffier background—she was a regular on *Central Park West*. But I'll reserve judgment until I see what this innovative series has cooked up for her (she'll play a beauty queen-turned-detective).

The talented writers of **NewsRadio** are also facing a daunting challenge: how to deal with the death of star Phil Hartman, who'll be replaced by his old *SNL* pal Jon Lovitz. Word is Hartman's character, Bill McNeal, will expire, but don't expect a

Very Special Episode—this sitcom is much too smart and cynical to slip into sentimentality. The question is, Will the histrionic Lovitz push the series (which started to flirt with surrealism last season) from sublime to ridiculous? It would be a shame if a show this sharp became as silly as, say, *3rd Rock From the Sun*.

Two other NBC series, **ER** and **Working**, are adding familiar faces, but for very different reasons. After shelling out \$13 million an episode for TV's No. 1 drama, the Peacock wants to ensure *ER*'s popularity. So the net chose an actress with broad, middle-of-



**NEW KIDS ON THE BOX** (Clockwise from top left) *NYPD*'s Schroder, *Working*'s Mazar, *NewsRadio*'s Lovitz, *ER*'s Martin, *Homicide*'s Esposito, *90210*'s Leighton and Marcil



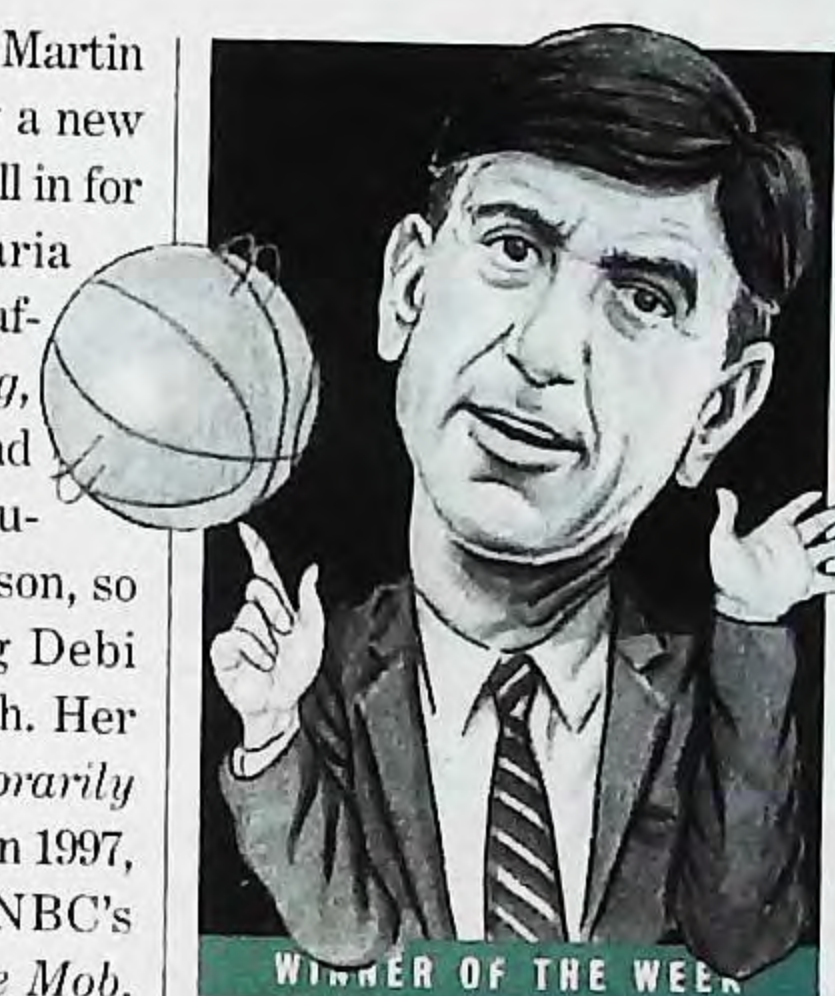
LOOKING FOR A  
LITTLE ACTION THIS  
SATURDAY NIGHT?



the-road appeal, Kellie Martin (*Life Goes On*), to play a new med student and help fill in for future movie star Maria Bello, who, sadly, split after one season. *Working*, meanwhile, failed to find a personality—or an audience—in its first season, so producers are hoping Debi Mazar will provide both. Her office-set sitcom, *Temporarily Yours*, bombed on CBS in 1997, but she costarred in NBC's May hit *Witness to the Mob*, so the network's high on her.

Finally, **Beverly Hills 90210** wants to prove it's not just for kids—especially now that it'll face off with The WB's teen steamroller *Dawson's Creek*—so the show's added two vixens with experience on more mature soaps, *Melrose Place*'s Laura Leighton (for a six-episode guest stint) and *General Hospital*'s Vanessa Marcil (as a regular). With Jason Priestley leaving this season, *90210* needs more star power than nepotism poster girl Tori Spelling could ever muster.

>> Talk about your favorite TV shows at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com) <<



WINNER OF THE WEEK

## Marv Albert

The "Yesss!" man will get a chance to take another bite out of sports broadcasting now that the MSG network has given him his old job back.

LOSER OF THE WEEK

## MSG

The sports net's rehiring of confessed back chomper Albert shows questionable taste.

## SOUND BITES

"You know whose birthday is today? Michael Flatley, Lord of the Dance. If you haven't gotten him a gift yet, you can't go wrong with a mirror." JAY LENO on *The Tonight Show*

"A couple of 18-year-olds are planning to lose their virginity on the Internet.... I believe you'll be able to find them at [www.fumblingwithacondom.com](http://www.fumblingwithacondom.com)." DAVID LETTERMAN on *Late Show*

"General Electric [is reportedly] considering selling NBC. Actually, I'm a little offended because until they find a buyer, I've been asked to stay out of the hallways." CONAN O'BRIEN on *Late Night*

"Madonna this week ended negotiations with London producers and said she will not be appearing as Maggie in the play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The producers will now go with their second choice: an actress." DENNIS MILLER on *Dennis Miller Live*

## THE RATINGS

# FUNERAL AT FOX

**FOX FILES**, the fourth net's foray into the newsmag fray, got off to an unexpectedly rocky start; the much-hyped Diana episode (74th), featuring exclusive interviews with the late princess' brother and mother, didn't command much of an audience, royal or otherwise. A more compatible lead-in might have helped: say, *Ally McBeal* (44th) rather than *World's Wildest Police Videos* (51st).

Elsewhere on Thursday, *Just Shoot Me* (3rd) again built on *Seinfeld*'s (7th) audience, while part 4 of Stephen King's *The Stand* (38th) became the first installment to dip below the top 30. CBS had miniseries woes too; part 1 of its encore presentation of *Scarlett* (49th) got a wake-up call from the Tracey Gold chiller *Sleep, Baby, Sleep* (19th).



ROYAL PAIN Charles Spencer with Fox's Catherine Crier

## TOP 30

	VIEWERS*		LAST WEEK
1	15.0	60 MINUTES CBS, Sunday, 7 p.m.	2
2	13.9	DATeline NBC NBC, Tuesday, 10 p.m.	—
3	13.3	JUST SHOOT ME (R) NBC, Thursday, 9:30 p.m.	—
4	13.1	PRIMETIME LIVE ABC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	9
5	12.9	48 HOURS (R) CBS, Monday, 10 p.m.	11
6	12.8	FRASIER (R) NBC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	—
7	12.6	ER (R) NBC, Thursday, 10 p.m.	—
	12.6	SEINFELD (R) NBC, Thursday, 9 p.m.	3
9	11.7	20/20 ABC, Friday, 10 p.m.	10
10	11.2	FRIENDS (R) NBC, Thursday, 8 p.m.	14
	11.2	3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN (R) NBC, Tuesday, 9:30 p.m.	—
12	10.8	LAW & ORDER NBC, Wednesday, 10 p.m.	18
	10.8	TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL (R) CBS, Sunday, 8 p.m.	7
14	10.7	WALKER, TEXAS RANGER (R) CBS, Saturday, 10 p.m.	21
15	10.1	DATeline NBC NBC, Sunday, 8 p.m.	14
16	10.0	JAG (R) CBS, Tuesday, 8 p.m.	26
17	9.8	DIAGNOSIS MURDER (R) CBS, Thursday, 9 p.m.	16
	9.8	HOME IMPROVEMENT (R) ABC, Tuesday, 8 p.m.	—
19	9.7	EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND (R) CBS, Monday, 9 p.m.	33
	9.7	MOVIE: SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP (R) ABC, Sunday, 9 p.m.	—
	9.7	SUDDENLY SUSAN (R) NBC, Thursday, 8:30 p.m.	—
22	9.5	DATeline NBC NBC, Monday, 8 p.m.	—
	9.5	48 HOURS CBS, Thursday, 10 p.m.	30
24	9.3	THE DREW CAREY SHOW (R) ABC, Wednesday, 9 p.m.	23
25	9.2	MOVIE: STEPHEN KING'S THE STAND, PART 2 (R) ABC, Monday, 9 p.m.	—
26	9.1	UNMASKED! EXPOSING THE SECRETS OF DECEPTION (R) NBC, Saturday, 10 p.m.	—
27	9.0	DHARMA & GREG (R) ABC, Wednesday, 8 p.m.	—
	9.0	MOVIE: STEPHEN KING'S THE STAND, PART 3 (R) ABC, Tuesday, 9 p.m.	—
29	8.9	CYBILL CBS, Monday, 9:30 p.m.	51
30	8.8	FRASIER (R) NBC, Sunday, 9 p.m.	—

\*IN MILLIONS WEEK OF JULY 13-19, 1998  
(R) RERUN SOURCE: NIELSEN MEDIA RESEARCH



ALL NEW EPISODES

**THE NET**  
STARRING BROOKE LANGTON  
OF MELROSE PLACE  
They stole her name.  
They deleted her identity.  
Now they want her body.  
9PM/8C

# SATURDAY NIGHT Heat

**SINS OF  
THE CITY**  
STARRING  
MARCUS GRAHAM  
When is it not a  
sin for a priest to  
commit adultery?  
10PM/9C



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# WHAT to WATCH

A day-to-day guide to notable programs. Times are Eastern daylight and are subject to change. by Mike Flaherty

## MONDAY

July 27

SEASON PREMIERE

**8-9PM**  
**MELROSE PLACE** (Fox, TV-14-LSV) Mom-to-be Taylor wants to kill her-

self; Kyle chases Amanda, who's set to marry Rory, while Sam and Jennifer vie for Billy. Welcome back, kids!



PEACE, LOVE, AND CHAOS

**8-9PM**  
**IN SEARCH OF HISTORY** (History Channel, TV-G) "Unsolved History Week" surveys could-be phenomena like the Loch Ness Monster, the lost city of Atlantis, and the Holy Grail. (Airs through July 31.)

**9-10PM\***

**1968: THE YEAR THAT SHAPED A GENERATION** (PBS, TV-14-V) Hats off to writer-director-producer Steve Talbot. Thirty years later, he's waded through '68's myriad scenes of infamy—the RFK and MLK assassinations, LBJ's abdication (above), the Tet offensive, and the turbulent Democratic National Convention, to name a few—and distilled the tumult of that watershed year into a fresh, edifying, and utterly watchable hour. A

\*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

**9-10PM**

**ALLY MCBEAL** (Fox, TV-PG-D) Guest star Richard Kiley kicks in an Emmy-caliber turn as an aged artist trying to wrest control of his estate from his family. (R)

**9-10PM**

**RETRO WEEK** (TLC, TV-G) Call it Shtick at Nite, as TLC's nostalgic stunt pulls together cast reunions of *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Happy Days*, *Laverne & Shirley*, *The Brady Bunch*, and *Star Trek*. (Airs through July 31.)

**10-11PM**

**OZ** (HBO, TV-MA) O'Reilly undergoes a lumpectomy, Alvarez learns who raped Glynn's daughter, and Schilling and Mack make a murderous power play.

## TUESDAY

July 28

NEW NIGHT

**8-8:30PM**

**KING OF THE HILL** (Fox, TV-PG-L) The Hills relocate to their '98-99 home with a beaut, as Hank gets into hot water when he mistakenly buys crack as fishing bait. (R)

SERIES DEBUT

**9-10PM**

**GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS: PRIME-TIME** (Fox, TV-PG) Believe it or not (oops, wrong show), but this episode tells the (ahem) stomach-turning tale of an agoraphobic (!) woman who has a 303-pound tumor removed. Pass the popcorn!

**10-11PM**

**REAL SPORTS WITH BRYANT GUMBEL** (HBO, TV-PG) Correspondent Frank Deford looks at attempts to rehabilitate the legacies of two of baseball's fallen idols: Chicago "Black Sox" legend "Shoeless" Joe Jackson and Pete Rose.



SEASON PREMIERE

**10-11PM**

**VIVA VARIETY: VIVA IN VEGAS SPECIAL** (Comedy Central, TV-PG) Why does *Viva* fall just short of its brilliant promise? This edition holds a big clue: Thomas Lennon, Kerri Kenney, and Michael Black (above) err by handling their kitsch-laden subject with kid gloves. Need proof? Check the untapped yuks in tonight's guest spots by Rip Taylor, Susan Anton, and Jack Jones: For crying out loud, there's enough cheese here for a Laughing Cow sampler plate, and all we get is a Ritz-size dollop. B-

# The Guest List



Look Who's on The Couch This Week  
(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

MICHAEL J. FOX

**CHARLIE ROSE Monday** Samuel L. Jackson, Adrian Lyne **Thursday** Catherine Deneuve, author Rick Bass

**DAVID LETTERMAN Monday** Jenny McCarthy, Adam Arkin, musical guest Tori Amos **Tuesday** Gary Sinise, musical guests Goo Goo Dolls **Wednesday** Yasmine Bleeth, comedian David Brenner, musical guests Barenaked Ladies **Thursday** Samuel L. Jackson, musical guests Smashing Pumpkins **Friday** Jamie Lee Curtis

**JAY LENO Monday** Michael J. Fox, musical guest LL Cool J **Tuesday** Dennis Quaid, musical guest Alan Jackson **Wednesday** Musical guests Cleopatra **Thursday** Isaac Mizrahi

**THE VIEW Monday** Todd Oldham, musical guest Gloria Estefan **Tuesday** Steven Spielberg **Wednesday** Lisa Rinna **Thursday** Natasha Richardson **Friday** Samuel L. Jackson

**ROSIE O'DONNELL Monday** Drew Barrymore, Tom Sizemore **Tuesday** Bob Barker, Lacey Chabert, musical guests Savage Garden (R) **Wednesday** Mike Douglas, Rob Estes, musical guests Hanson (R) **Thursday** Hillary Rodham Clinton, musical guest Faith Hill (R) **Friday** Jane Alexander, musical guest Rod Stewart (R)

**POLITICALLY INCORRECT Monday** Richard Lewis, Dixie Carter **Tuesday** Edie McClurg, Matt Drudge, Dee Dee Myers **Wednesday** Mariel Hemingway **Thursday** Robert Vaughn



## WEDNESDAY

July 29

8:30-11PM\*

**GUTS 'N' GLORY** (PBS, TV-PG) The special melds two documentaries: "D-Day" and "The Battle of the Bulge." (R)

\*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS



ALL WET

8-10PM

**TERROR IN THE MALL** (Fox) No, not the story of a Hanson appearance run amok. Instead, rainstorms bust a dam that holds the water that floods the mall that costar David Soul (above) built, trapping him inside with a pop star, her manager, a hapless security guard, the sheriff's wife, and a way-too-good-looking psycho played by *Melrose Place*'s Rob Estes. While watching them drown in hyper-earnest soap opera acting, have fun counting the cinematic rip-offs, from *Titanic* to *Silence of the Lambs*. But really, it's *The Poseidon Adventure* at Chess King. C —Michele Romero

CLASSIC EPISODE

9:30-10PM

**ELLEN** (ABC, TV-14) Guest star Emma Thompson (playing herself) unloads a couple of juicy secrets on her new personal assistant. Guess who? (R)

10-10:30PM

**SOUTH PARK** (Comedy Central, TV-MA) The boys play dodgeball in China and meet a nurse who gives the phrase *with child* a whole new meaning. (R)

## THURSDAY

July 30

8-9:30PM

**AMERICA'S TEENAGERS: GROWING UP ON TELEVISION** (ABC, TV-PG-D) *Sabrina*'s Melissa Joan Hart conjures up a ton of clips tracking TV's portrayal of America's most misunderstood demographic.

9-9:30PM

**SEINFELD** (NBC, TV-PG) Kramer "gets" gonorrhea, Jerry angles to hear his girlfriend's "tractor story," Elaine discovers that Puddy's a man of God, and George learns the art of a showbiz exit. (R)

9-10PM

**FOX FILES** (Fox) It's Exploitation Prepubescent Girls Week when the nascent newsmag reports on an Internet kiddie-porn peddler and offers a peek backstage at the Spice Girls' current U.S. tour.

9-10PM

**DIAGNOSIS MURDER** (CBS, TV-PG-D) Our thoughts exactly, as this ep sports cameos by Regis, Kathie Lee, and Phyllis Diller. (R)



SWISH BLADE SISTERS

8:05-11:05PM

**1998 GOODWILL GAMES** (TBS) Michelle Kwan (above) takes to the ice with her U.S. teammates in the all-important short program competing against, among others, the unfortunately named Russian ice queen Irina Slutskaya.

## WHAT TO WATCH

## FRIDAY

July 31

30TH ANNIVERSARY

2-3PM

**ONE LIFE TO LIVE** (ABC) The special clip-filled hour features stalwarts of the soap like Robin Strasser, Erika Slezak, Phil Carey, and James DePaiva reminiscing on three decades of bathetic, bitchy, backstabbing fun.

7-8PM

**HARD ROCK LIVE** (VH1, TV-PG) R&B's the order of the day, as Boyz II Men and Brian McKnight take to the stage.

8-10PM

**STAND AGAINST FEAR** (NBC, TV-14) Tonight on *Blame the Victim* Theater, *Roseanne*'s Sarah Chalke plays a high

schooler paying the price for rape accusations against two popular football players. (R)

9-10PM

**MILLENNIUM** (Fox, TV-14-SV) Shorn of the impossibly high expectations created by Fox back in October '96, the series' grim debut episode actually holds up pretty well. You might want to give it another try. (R)

9-11PM

**WHITE MAN'S BURDEN** (USA Network, TV-14-V) Depending on your perspective, the 1995 John Travolta vehicle—in which he plays a blue-collar shlub fighting against an America where

blacks are the ruling elite and whites the underclass—is either a provocative allegory or a really bad joke.

10-11PM

**NASH BRIDGES** (CBS, TV-14-LV) Penny Marshall makes a rare prime-time appearance, guesting as a New York cop who joins forces with her buddy Nash to help catch a supermodel's stalker. (R)

10:30PM-12:05AM

**SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT** (Bravo, R) And we think you know what "it" is.... Spike Lee's breakout 1986 feature stars Tracy Camilla Johns (whatever happened to her, anyway?) as a Brooklyn hottie balancing a motley trio of men.



HALLOWEEN IN JULY

8:30-9PM

**R.L. STINE'S GHOSTS OF FEAR STREET** (ABC, TV-G) This rendering of the best-selling children's novels (in which an author returns with his family to the scene of his eerie books) should have no problem scaring up fans. It has the chills kids crave, a conscientiousness parents will applaud, and...Red Buttons (above left with Talia Balsam, Cameron Finley, Christopher Rich, Vincent Berry, and Alex Breckenridge). Besides, any show with an invisible dog named Spooky and a kid nicknamed Mulder is automatically worthy in my book. A —Shawna Malcom

## SATURDAY

August 1

7-8PM

**DISNEY'S YOUNG MUSICIANS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** (Disney Channel, TV-G) Kids play the darndest things: Bernadette Peters hosts as 85 prodigious preteens salute classic Hollywood film scores from Chicago's Ravinia Festival.

8-9PM

**IN FOCUS** (ESPN Classic Sports) "Howard Cosell at Large" looks back at the sportscaster whose extemporaneity and erudition put the color in *color commentary*.

8-10PM

**BATMAN: MASK OF THE PHANTASM** (Cartoon Network, TV-Y7-FV) The first feature-length version of *Batman: The Animated Series* (and

the net's first-ever feature debut) makes this premiere a must-see for Caped Crusader enthusiasts.



SERIES DEBUT

9-11PM

**FIRE DOWN BELOW** (HBO, R) Feel your face turn as green as Steven Seagal's politics when he plays a guitar-strumming environmentalist after a bunch of Earth-raping baddies in the 1997 film.

SERIES DEBUT

11-11:30PM

**RUDE AWAKENING** (Showtime, TV-MA) The sitcom stars Sherilyn Fenn as a slatternly souse forced to go straight.

10-11PM

**LINC'S** (Showtime, TV-MA) Former *X-Files* Steven Williams (above right) stars as the owner of a D.C. bar whose clientele includes everyone from a cabbie (*Oz*'s Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje) to a high-powered lobbyist (Pam Grier, left). Cowritten by Tim Reid and directed by Debbie Allen, *Linc's* boasts an impressive ensemble, but it's so busy addressing issues (gays in the military, the tobacco bill) that it often forgets to be funny. Which is a problem for a comedy. B- —BF

## Choice Reruns

ANGLOPHILES AND MYSTERY FANS ARE two of television's most insatiable and loyal audiences. And that's good news for A&E as it sets about customizing its *Mysteries to Die For* (weeknights, 10-11 p.m.) franchise by allocating a prime-time slot to each of its case-cracking masterminds. To wit, Monday through Thursday will spotlight, respectively, David Suchet's Hercule Poirot, John Thaw's Inspector Morse, Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes, and Joan Hickson's Miss Marple. Avid viewer interest? Well, that's, um, elementary.

THE MIGHTY HERCULE David Suchet's Poirot



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## WHAT TO WATCH

## SUNDAY

August 2

NOON-1:45PM

**THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES** (Cinemax, PG) The considerable charms of Vincent Price are on display in the 1971 film about a scientist who devises a series of horrific, hilarious murders to avenge the death of his wife.

6-8PM

**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S EXPLORER: OFF THE MAP WITH BOYD MATSON** (TBS) The *Explorer* host gets his 15 minutes (literally) when his globe-trotting, sometimes death-defying exploits are celebrated as the series looks back on its first 100 episodes.

7-9PM

**SWEET DECEPTION** (Family Channel, TV-PG) The TV movie stars Joanna Pacula as a woman convicted of her husband's murder. But with a costarring crew featuring Jack Scalia, Kate Jackson, and Joan Collins, you just know it's gotta be a bum rap.

8-8:30PM

**THE SIMPSONS** (Fox, TV-PG) Steve Martin and U2 guest-star when Homer finally pursues a job he's ideally qualified for: sanitation commissioner. (R)



AUTEUR, AUTEUR!

8-10PM

**BIOGRAPHY** (A&E, TV-G) Some might complain that, like his last couple films, this special installment on the life and times of Steven Spielberg (above) is a tad longer than need be. Not us, of course.

8-9PM

**GARY BUSEY: THE E! TRUE HOLLYWOOD STORY** (E!, TV-PG) This guy needs an E! profile like a hole in the head. But seriously, he's endured cancer, cocaine addiction, a life-threatening motorcycle accident, and friendships with Cheech Marin and Willie Nelson. Sheesh, when did he find time to act?

8-9PM

**TIGER NEXT DOOR** (Discovery Channel, TV-G) Sure, it's an informative look at the plight of a Bengal tigress and her cubs set against India's ever-changing political climate. But would you care if Mommy and her babies weren't so gosh-darned cute?

8-9PM

**A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY** (Discovery Channel, TV-G) As strange Cold War bedfellowing goes, it doesn't get any better than the Jennifer Project, an alliance between Richard Nixon, the CIA, and Howard Hughes. The documentary revisits the endeavor, wherein those dubious, devious entities joined forces to raise a sunken Soviet sub from the floor of the Pacific.



THEM'S FIGHTING WORDS

9-11PM

**WAR AND CIVILIZATION** (TLC) At first, W&C's two opening installments seem perversely weighted toward the former and pretty scant on the latter, until their esteemed narrator, Walter Cronkite (above), intones, "The history of empires is written in blood." Suddenly, the connection between cultural preeminence and the resources, land, and power needed to support it becomes all too clear, a geopolitical reality that's as valid in present-day Washington, D.C., as it was in ancient Athens. "First Blood" relates the evolution of warfare from provincial border skirmishes to city-state conquest (via the story of Alexander the Great), while "Empires and Armies" traces the development of armor, technology, and logistics in buttressing the mighty twin peaks of antiquity, Rome and China. (Airs through August 5.) B+

8PM-MIDNIGHT

**STARRING MEL GIBSON** (Cinemax, PG, R) The double feature presents *Forever Young* (1992), as Mel plays a cryogenically frozen man who thaws out then hooks up with Jamie Lee Curtis, and 1989's *Lethal Weapon 2*.

8:30-9PM

**THE SIMPSONS** (Fox, TV-PG) Lisa (with a little help from deep-thinking guest star Stephen Jay Gould) defends a Springfield meadow-cum-archaeological site slated to become a mega-mall. (R)

9-11PM

**COLUMBO GOES TO COLLEGE** (Family Channel, TV-PG) Robert Culp guest-stars when the esteemed detective, a little long in the tooth but no less sharp in the mind, dogs two students who've offed their professor.

9-10PM

**THE X-FILES** (Fox, TV-14-LV) An admittedly mediocre outing from the '97-98 season, "Schizogeny" nevertheless offers an interesting murder angle (apparently, killer trees are responsible) and a curious *Psycho* reference. (R)

9-11PM

**THE SURROGATE** (ABC, TV-PG) Alyssa Milano agrees to be a uterus-for-hire for a reproductively stymied couple (Connie Sellecca and David Dukes)—until some unearthed secrets convince her this is one family line she'd rather not perpetuate. (R)

9-10:30PM\*

**REBECCA** (PBS, TV-PG) Diana Rigg snagged an Emmy for her part in the adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's eerie novel. See why. (R; concludes Aug. 3.)

\*CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS

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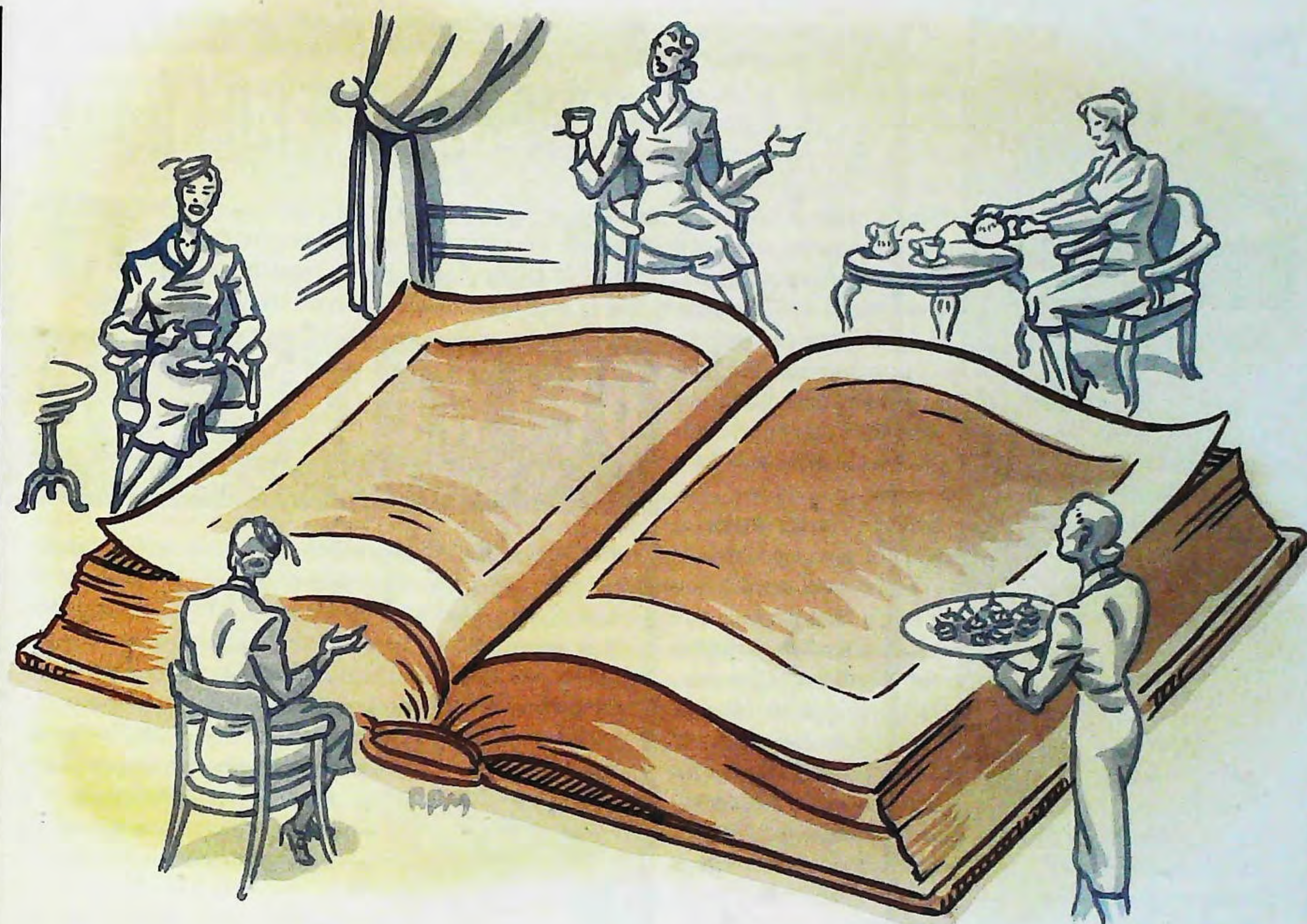
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## Join the Club

Inspired by Oprah Winfrey's on-air book group, countless readers have started their own. Here's a look at some of the literary finds that have gotten a well-deserved boost from the trend. **by Lisa Schwarzbaum**

THE PHOTOGRAPH THAT accompanied a major 1997 magazine profile of Oprah Winfrey posed America's most influential bookseller in a majestic prep-school library. She's seated in a caramel-colored leather club chair, elegant in a long crimson dress. Two lustrously furry dogs lounge obediently at hand. Oprah props a tome in her lap, a fine volume with a spine stamped in gold. It's an inviting, classical portrait, one that fairly sings out, "Come!

Be enriched by reading!"

It's also like no pose known on earth, not to the thousands of reading groups that have taken on new cultural cachet—and marketplace buying power—since Winfrey began Oprah's Book Club in 1996 (see story on page 67). For the rest of us, jeans, sweatpants, or wilted end-of-the-workday wardrobes are more in vogue. Participants sprawl on living room floors. And moderate-budget portable paperbacks are the preferred format.

There is one way, though, in which book-club reality is as high-toned as Oprah's glamour shot: Unusually good books are being chosen—even without celebrity endorsement—and promoted onto the best-seller list by reader-to-reader word of mouth, much of it within book groups that have historically gone for substance over a V.C. Andrews byline. Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (HarperPerennial, \$13), for instance, a densely constructed family

drama set in India, requires concentration to enjoy Roy's free-ranging poetic voice; this week, with no TV-star backing, it's at No. 4 on the *Publishers Weekly* chart. **Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood**, by Rebecca Wells (HarperPerennial, \$13.50), a springy, good 'ol Louisiana girls romp with a *Fried Green Tomatoes* feel, bounced to the top of the charts seemingly out of nowhere, propelled entirely by grassroots endorsement. So popular is Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun* (Broadway, \$13), a sensuous Italian travelogue from a San Francisco poet (more M.F.K. Fisher piquant than Peter Mayle droll), that the nonfiction account is making its way into book clubs that generally limit their selections to fiction. Naturally, all this buying





## NEW in Paperback

**Sex on the Brain** Deborah Blum (Penguin, \$13.95, first published in 1997) Intelligent and well-reported examination of the biological differences between women and men—and how this relates to everything from monogamy to map reading.

**A Dry Spell** Susie Moloney (Island, \$6.99, 1997) In this compelling read, a legendary rainmaker helps a withered North Dakota farming community—and a female banker—get through their respective droughts.

**Promiscuities** Naomi Wolf (Fawcett, \$13.95, 1997) Narrow perspective on the formation of female sexual identity; worthwhile for the evocative first-person storytelling.

**Dining by Rail** James D. Porterfield (St. Martin's Griffin, \$17.95, 1993) Mouth-watering social history of railroad cuisine, complete with recipes.

power is not lost on publishers, many of whom now target selected paperback titles as club fodder and bind reading guides between the covers. Ballantine is developing videos of authors discussing their work (for gatherings of readers who apparently can't get enough of the romance of writers sitting at their com-

puter keyboard, procrastinating). Vintage—particularly adept at the game—publishes free reading-group guides, available in bookstores, and posts club-oriented news and information on its website. Bookstores themselves are producing support materials and serving as matchmakers: For any straggler looking to join the party, places like Borders will assemble groups of like-minded strangers, run discussions, and provide folding chairs.

And for the truly clueless, a handful of new paperback titles describe how to start, run, and feed a local-chapter literary salon: In **The Reading Group Handbook** (Hyperion, \$11.95), for example, Rachel W. Jacobsohn (president of the heretofore little known Association of Book Group Readers and Leaders) explains that “food at meetings is a worthy addition.” Jacobsohn heartily endorses popcorn, cheese, crackers, and licorice—but not, I would hope, while reading *Under the Tuscan Sun*.

In **The Book Group Book**, by Ellen Slezak (Chicago Review Press, \$12), a useful, no-nonsense anthology of personal experiences from actual book-group participants, contributors talk about what makes a good discussion leader (or a bad one), why groups stay together (or fall apart), and why there are so many fewer men than women engaged in this worthy 1990s expression of the human desire for community. (Why? Why ask why? One man suggests it'll be a great day when males can weep like females while reading *The Joy Luck Club*.)

A big chunk of Slezak's book consists of suggested reading lists, organized for

every interest from African-American writers (try Bebe Moore Campbell's *Your Blues Ain't Like Mine*) to capital management and corporate culture (i.e., Al Neuharth's *Confessions of an S.O.B.*) There is one category missing, though: junk. In other words, airplane books. Sex-

and-shopping fairy tales. Macho techno-fantasies. Today's paperback best-seller lists suggest that when it comes to the book-clubbing of America, there's taste in numbers. And that Oprah has every right to sit on her club-chair throne, beaming. ■ (Reporting by Clarissa Cruz)

## BETWEEN THE LINES

The inside scoop on the book world

■ **FAST LEARNER** Nineteen-year-old Molly Jong-Fast, daughter of Erica Jong and sci-fi novelist Jonathan Fast (and granddaughter of *Spartacus* author Howard Fast), has sold her first novel to Villard for a low-six-figure sum on the basis of just two chapters and an outline. “My mother said to me, ‘Write what you know,’” says Jong-Fast, a transfer student at New York University, and apparently she has: The tentatively titled *Girl* is about an “overprivileged young woman in a famous family.” Look for it in spring 2000, when Jong-Fast will be barely legal.



McINERNEY



ELLIS

fiction. *Model*'s hero is a celebrity journalist who deplores the “high-sheen magazines” for which he toils. Brings to mind that Julia Roberts interview he did a few years ago for the rag-trade glossy *Harper's Bazaar*. —Alexandra Jacobs and Matthew Flamm

■ **BACK IN FASHION** A decade after they established literary reputations by chronicling glitz, materialism, and urban ennui, both Jay McInerney and Bret Easton Ellis have turned to... chronicling glitz, materialism, and urban ennui. The New York fashion world will be the backdrop for both McInerney's *Model Behavior* (coming from Knopf in September) and Ellis' *Glamorama* (due from Knopf in January). “It seems essentially to me a coincidence that doesn't have any significance,” insists Gary Fisketjon, the editor for both authors, who also share an agent—and a friendship. Speaking of significance, McInerney may have burned at least one runway with this particular

## A SAMPLING OF UNUSUAL BOOK CLUBS

### OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

**S** HEDDING ITS STODGY IMAGE as a pastime for bookworms with too much time on their hands, the book club is suddenly sexy. There are roughly 500,000 book clubs in the United States—nearly double the number in 1994—estimates Rachel Jacobsohn, author of *The Reading Group Handbook*, and there seems to be a group for virtually every possible interest, from self-help to science fiction. Here are a few that caught our attention:

■ **At MOSTLY, WE EAT**, a 12-person group based in northwest New Jersey, members partake in sumptuous repasts that are loosely inspired by the books they're discussing, says member Mary Bolster, a magazine editor. For Martha McPhee's hippie-themed novel *Bright Angel Time*, participants nibbled on dishes containing mushrooms; for Michael Dorris' *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (which features a multiethnic protagonist), the group feasted on “fusion foods” such as maize fritters with spicy tartar sauce. “Flavor always wins out over authenticity—we're very aptly named,” says Bolster.

■ **SECOND FOUNDATION** members in Minneapolis analyze their favorite sci-fi authors and meet their heroes at local conventions. “Science-fiction fandom tends to be made up of social outcasts—people who were not popular in high school,” says founder Eric Heideman, a sci-fi columnist for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. “[Our members] tend to be tolerant because they know what it feels like to be excluded.” But not too tolerant. During a heated discussion about military science fiction, one former member asked Heideman, “Suppose I was to cross the room and start pounding you?”

■ **Female convicts are sentenced** to a book group instead of jail at **CHANGING LIVES THROUGH LITERATURE** in Lowell, Mass. he women, caught in a cycle of crimes such as credit-card theft or prostitution, are “introduced to another way of thinking,” says group facilitator and professor Jean Trounstein. “Their way of seeing the world is insightful in a different way.” Sure is. One member's former pimp attended the program's graduation ceremony.

■ **Participants discuss books that “tend to affect social and political ideas,”** says cofounder David Wellenbrock of the Stockton, Calif., group devoted to weighty tomes. With a reading list that boasts such titles as *The Federalist Papers* and *Foundations of Jurisprudence*, this club isn't for the feeble-minded—its members include a district attorney, doctor, college professor, and state senator. Downside? “With these people...nobody has enough airtime.” —CC



ILLUSTRATION BY EVERETT BECK



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# The Week

## Nonfiction

**IN SEARCH OF DONNA REED** Jay Fultz (University of Iowa Press, \$25.95)

In this earnest hagiography by a self-confessed Reed fan "since my pimply adolescence," the author perfunctorily traces the path of this ambitious "cornfed beauty" from Iowa to Hollywood—her three marriages, various career snubs, and death from pancreatic cancer two weeks before her 65th birthday. Though she won an Oscar for *From Here to Eternity* and a Golden Globe for her eponymous TV show (almost titled *Aw Gee, Mom!*), Reed always felt like a second-class Hollywood citizen and was often treated as such (she was fired from *Dallas* with two years left on her contract). Fultz concludes that "having come all this distance, I still can't explain her hold on my lost youth...maybe now I have some kind of hold on her. My own Donna Reed." Time to get a life, Mr. Fultz. **C+** —Carmela Curran

**GI JOE: THE COMPLETE STORY OF AMERICA'S FAVORITE MAN OF ACTION** John Michlig (Chronicle, \$29.95)

Appearing in 1964 at the height of the Barbie era and routed, 13 years later, by platoons of *Star Wars* figurines, GI Joe was a toy both of and in spite of its times. Despite industry wisdom that "a boy will never play with a doll," the "action figure" (as Hasbro insisted it be called) was a massive success right out of the gate. Later, when Vietnam soured combat-toy sales (and this reviewer and his little chums were putting Joe on trial for war crimes), the

company cannily repositioned its plastic-molded hero as an "adventurer." While Michlig's text divulges more about Hasbro inter-office politics than you really need to know, this beautifully designed coffee-table tome is as much a fetish object as the original 1965 Deep Sea Diver Joe. **B** —Ty Burr

**THE 50 GREATEST JEWISH MOVIES: A CRITIC'S RANKING OF THE VERY BEST** Kathryn Bernheimer (Birch Lane, \$21.95)

Boulder, Colo., film critic Bernheimer sets out her criteria for a Jewish movie at the beginning—"a film that examines an aspect of the Jewish experience and features at least one clearly defined Jewish central character"—but seems unable to find 50 of those that are also of indisputably high quality. Some of her choices are beyond reproach (*Schindler's List*), some are unknown gems (*The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick*), but in some entries—like *Yentl*—Bernheimer admits that she's willing to compromise quality in order to emphasize ethnicity. What's more, she underestimates her presumably Jewish audience by rejecting films that may be too unsettling; for example, she excludes the 1937 classic *Grand Illusion* because it features sympathetic German characters. As one notable Jew once said: "No servant can serve two masters." **C+** —Caren Weiner

**TWITCH AND SHOUT: A TOURETTER'S TALE** Lowell Handler (Dutton, \$23.95)

The first memoir by someone with Tourette's syndrome, *Twitch and Shout* unmasks a neurobiological



COACH CLASS *Yentl*'s Barbra Streisand and Amy Irving make a Critic's cut

disorder characterized by ties, jerky movements, and the involuntary shouting of taboo thoughts. Handler, who narrated the acclaimed 1995 documentary *Twitch and Shout*, describes his diagnosis ("Would I become some kind of village idiot...?") and his evolution into a Tourette's syndrome activist. He meets neurologist Oliver Sacks and Touretters of all stripes, from twins who compulsively yell "Get it out forever!" (meaning Tourette's) to a Zulu healer whose culture holds the disease sacred. It's a mind-boggling account of a mind-boggling affliction. **B+** —Margot Mifflin

## Fiction

**LUCKY BASTARD** Charles McCarry (Random House, \$24.95) Readers who haven't yet had their fill of sex-

ual shenanigans in the political arena can sink their teeth into this blackly comic pseudo-thriller about the meteoric rise and fall of an amoral but irresistible politico who fancies himself the love child of JFK. John Fitzgerald Adams, a.k.a. Vaseline Jack, suffers from a dangerous case of "Don Juan psychosis"; he is also the willing puppet of an insidious "supernumerary nationality" that hopes his charisma will enable it to take over the world. McCarry's plot gets gnarly, but his cool, detached satire is nicely rendered. **B+** —Charles Winecoff

**FINAL VINYL DAYS AND OTHER STORIES** Jill McCorkle (Algonquin, \$18.95) Southern eccentrics and nostalgic baby boomers mingle in this offbeat but sometimes cutesy story collection. From "Your Hus-



MARKETING PLOY OF THE WEEK

## 'Top Secret'

It came wrapped in a brown paper bag, with the words *Top Secret* emblazoned on a hot pink sticker. Was it illicit? Pornographic? Vulgar? We should be so lucky. Inside was *Top Secret Recipes Lite!*, featuring reduced-fat versions of fast food like Big Macs. That's a secret we'd rather not know.

band *Is Cheating on Us* (in which a murderous mistress confronts her lover's wife) to "It's a Funeral! RSVP" (in which a woman explains that she "throws funerals" for a living), the irreverence doled out in these pages seems a bit forced. McCorkle is more convincing when she tackles subtler scenarios, like that of a pregnant woman trying desperately to quit smoking, or a daughter who suddenly frees herself from her controlling mother's negative influence. If you date

your final vinyl days by the demise of Jackson Browne, the Eagles, and Billy Joel, this platter's for you. **B** —MM

**QUITE A YEAR FOR PLUMS** Bailey White (Knopf, \$22) In this homespun first novel about a small town in Georgia, White (an NPR commentator and author) has assembled a quirky cast: Roger, a plant pathologist who specializes in peanuts; Ethel, Roger's ex-wife, who spits men out like watermelon seeds; Gawain, a forester obsessed with fire; and Jim Wade, an electric-fan aficionado, to name a few. These characters don't do a lot, at least as far as narrative action goes. Still, it's easy to get absorbed in their lives—so easy, in fact, that it's not until the end of the book that you realize the weirdest thing about them: They don't fight. Their small town is a place almost entirely free of conflict. And that, appealing though it may be, is far too nutty to be believed. **B** —Vanessa V. Friedman

**THE JOB** Douglas Kennedy (Hyperion, \$23.95) If you were desperate—deep in debt, marriage on the skids, out of a job (and, even worse, blackballed in your industry)—how far would you go for employment? Such is the premise of this "corporate thriller" about the repercussions of merger mania and downsizing. Ned Allen, the annoyingly joocular and condescending narrator, finds himself in the above situation and turns a very blind eye indeed when an old classmate offers him a job running a private-equity fund for an ex-sports star-turned-self-improvement guru. Marked by black-and-white characters and unbelievable plot twists, this is a blender-made book: Take *The Firm*, throw in some *Liar's Poker*, and puree. **C** —VVF

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## BEST-SELLERS

### McCOURT SHIP

**F**OR SIX WEEKS, the McCourt memoirs have been duking it out. Detractors say Malachy is piggybacking on Frank's fame; the younger brother does give props to the elder in his acknowledgments "for opening the golden door." (And let's not forget his "intrepid agent, no stranger to Midas," who landed him the \$600,000 book deal.) Malachy's *A Monk Swimming* has 200,000 copies in print after five pressruns, while the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angela's Ashes* has piled up 2.15 million copies and 62 printings.

## FICTION

- |  | WEEKS ON LIST |
|--|---------------|
| 1 POINT OF ORIGIN Patricia Cornwell, Putnam, \$25.95       | 1             |
| 2 I KNOW THIS MUCH IS TRUE Wally Lamb, ReganBooks, \$27.50 | 6             |
| 3 BRIDGET JONES'S DIARY Helen Fielding, Viking, \$22.95    | 6             |
| 4 SUMMER SISTERS Judy Blume, Delacorte, \$21.95            | 9             |
| 5 A WIDOW FOR ONE YEAR John Irving, Random House, \$27.95  | 11            |
| 6 THE KLONE AND I Danielle Steel, Delacorte, \$17.95       | 4             |
| 7 MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE Nicholas Sparks, Warner, \$20        | 14            |
| 8 THE LAST FULL MEASURE Jeff Shaara, Ballantine, \$25.95   | 7             |
| 9 UNSPEAKABLE Sandra Brown, Warner, \$25                   | 5             |
| 10 LOW COUNTRY Anne Rivers Siddons, HarperCollins, \$25    | 2             |

## NONFICTION

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1 SUGAR BUSTERS! H. Leighton Steward, Morrison C. Bethea, M.D., Sam S. Andrews, M.D., and Luis A. Balart, M.D., Ballantine, \$22 | 11 |
| 2 A PIRATE LOOKS AT FIFTY Jimmy Buffett, Random House, \$24.95   | 6  |
| 3 MARS AND VENUS STARTING OVER John Gray, Ph.D., HarperCollins, \$25   | 2  |
| 4 TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE Mitch Albom, Doubleday, \$19.95   | 37 |
| 5 THE 9 STEPS TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM Suze Orman, Crown, \$23   | 17 |
| 6 A MONK SWIMMING Malachy McCourt, Hyperion, \$23.95   | 6  |
| 7 ANGELA'S ASHES Frank McCourt, Scribner, \$24   | 94 |
| 8 MARILU HENNER'S TOTAL HEALTH MAKEOVER Marilu Henner with Laura Morton, ReganBooks, \$24  | 6  |
| 9 A WALK IN THE WOODS Bill Bryson, Broadway, \$25  | 6  |
| 10 THE MILLIONAIRE NEXT DOOR Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko, Longstreet, \$22  | 51 |

## TRADE PAPERBACKS

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1 DIVINE SECRETS OF THE YA-YA SISTERHOOD Rebecca Wells, HarperPerennial, \$14.50   | 23 |
| 2 DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF Dr. Richard Carlson, Hyperion, \$10.95   | 66 |
| 3 THE BEANIE BABY HANDBOOK Les and Sue Fox, West Highland Publishing, \$6.95   | 21 |
| 4 THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS Arundhati Roy, HarperPerennial, \$13   | 10 |
| 5 CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE TEENAGE SOUL J. Canfield, M.V. Hansen, and K. Kirberger, Health Communications, \$12.95           | 58 |
| 6 INTO THE WILD Jon Krakauer, Doubleday/Anchor, \$12.95  | 45 |
| 7 CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE PET LOVER'S SOUL J. Canfield, M.V. Hansen, M. Becker, and C. Kline Health Communications, \$12.95 | 12 |
| 8 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN Frances Mayes, Broadway, \$13   | 41 |
| 9 BREATH, EYES, MEMORY Edwidge Danticat, Vintage, \$11   | 8  |
| 10 8 WEEKS TO OPTIMUM HEALTH Andrew Weil, M.D., Fawcett Columbine, \$13.95   | 4  |

SOURCE: PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

## WHAT'S THE GOOD WORD?

**Sue Henry** won the Macavity and Anthony Awards, two of the mystery field's highest honors, for her first novel featuring Alaska "musher" Jessie Arnold. But in *DEADFALL*, the new hardcover in the Alaska series, Jessie gets some attention she definitely doesn't want. Somebody is stalking her, leaving threatening messages and notes, even causing an auto accident. Now, recuperating on a peaceful island with her favorite lead dog, Jessie suspects that she's not alone. Know what? She's right.

The ring of authenticity has always sounded loudly in the novels of **Richard Herman**, an Air Force veteran and former combat fighter pilot who knows how to bring military tension to realistic life. His new hardcover *AGAINST ALL ENEMIES* takes this ability one step farther, as Mr. Herman's hero defends a fellow soldier in a nail-biting court-martial with international implications. As in *A Few Good Men*, we discover the true breadth of a man's honor only when that honor is soundly challenged.



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## THE BROWSER

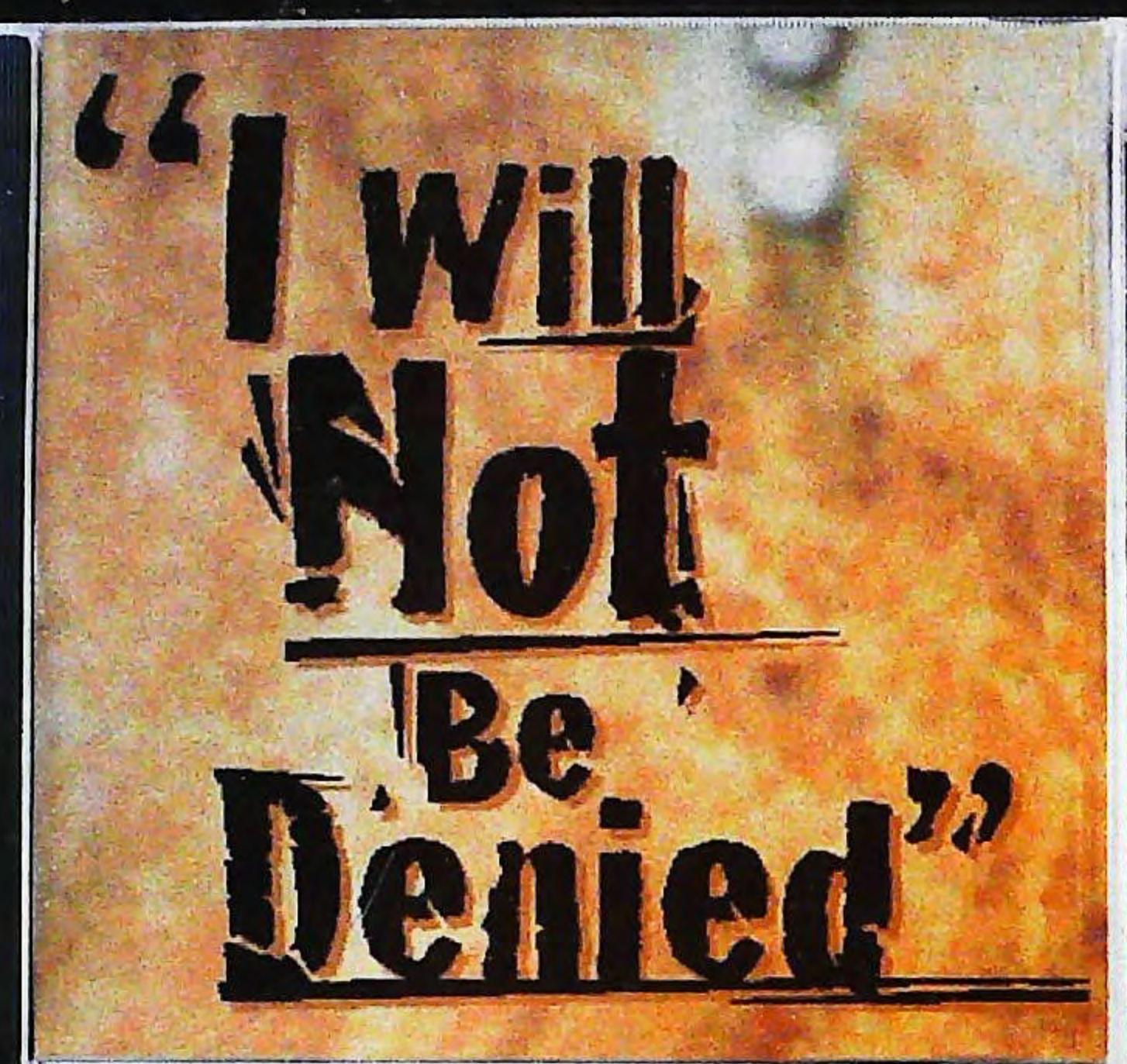
Opening lines from recently published books

"The approach to Northampton put Samantha Flint in mind of every other American mill town: pool halls and tire yards, laundromats abandoned by day, brown bags disguising empties left on the asphalt, Eagles, Kiwanis, and Lions, a burger-and-shake joint with rusted muscle cars revving in the parking lot, a defunct bowling alley." From WILTON BARNHARDT's new novel, *Show World* (St. Martin's, \$24.95)

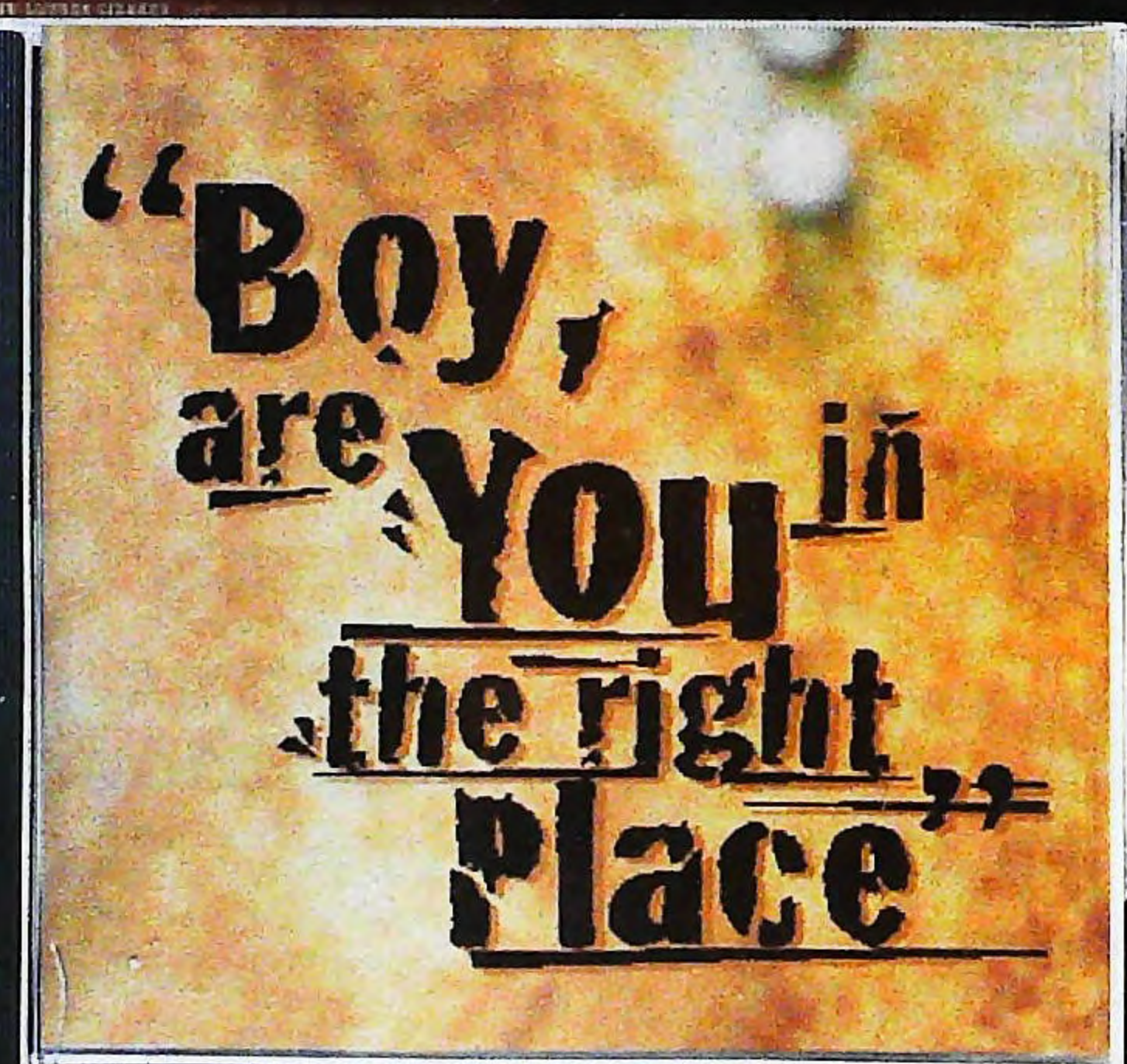
"Emily's hamster committed suicide right before her eyes." From JON KATZ's latest mystery, *Death Row* (Doubleday, \$21.95)



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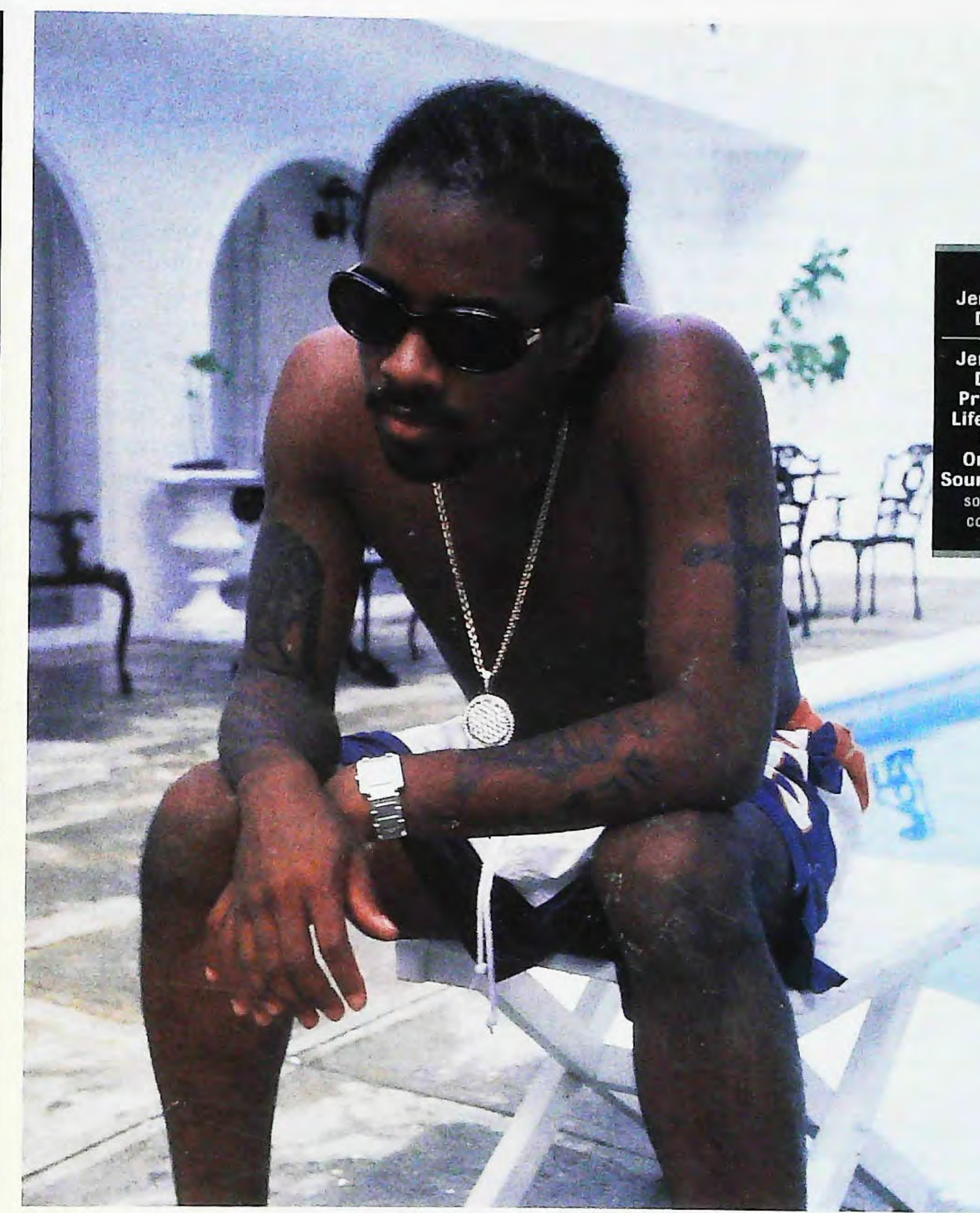
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**Jermaine Dupri**  
**Jermaine Dupri Presents Life in 1472 (The Original Soundtrack)**  
SO SO DEF/COLUMBIA

forged an airy, danceable (if not entirely distinctive) sound that's both suburban smooth and urban hard. If a Southern breeze could be translated into music, it would sound like one of Dupri's productions.

Apparently, that list of hits isn't satisfying enough. Dupri wants his name on the front, not back, of CD covers—hence the first album released under his own name, **Jermaine Dupri Presents Life in 1472 (The Original Soundtrack)**. To show off his Rolodex and perhaps bolster his own rapping, Dupri has recruited a who's who of contemporary R&B: Singing, rapping, or cavorting throughout the album are Carey, Usher, Mase, Lil' Kim, DMX, Nas, and his So So Def protégées Xscape, among others. To hell with the Puffy comparisons: With friends like these, who needs samples?

Dupri doesn't—not to the extent that Combs does, anyway—and he proves it on *Life in 1472*. The album is harder and tauter—more street—than his past hits, but it retains Dupri's Gulf Stream grooves. Pumped along by bass lines, percussion, and the occasional jab of musical color, tracks like "Money Ain't a Thang" (which skillfully intertwines Dupri's and Jay-Z's voices) and the swaying "The Party Continues (Video Version)" are spare and clean, yet don't lose their dynamic charge. Next to the bustling Puffy

# The Producer

Jermaine Dupri—the exec who's funkified Mariah, Usher, and others—steps before the mic. But can he save his own *Life*? by David Browne

NOW THAT CORPORATE mergers and synergy are all the rage, it was only a matter of time before pop music caught the bug. Record moguls want to be performers, producers want to be stars, and singers want to be

label owners—call it the Puffyization of pop. The latest insider with cross-pollination dreams is Atlanta producer and So So Def label CEO Jermaine Dupri. For most of the decade, Dupri has been content to work in

the background. On the hits he's produced and often cowritten for Usher, Mariah Carey, TLC, Da Brat, and a slew of others, Dupri has

**POOL FOR LOVE** More Jermaine as a producer than as a performer



sound or the congested tangle that often characterizes the Wu-Tang clang, Dupri's style of R&B breathes. From start to finish, *Life in 1472* jingles, baby. (In case you're wondering, J and D are the 10th and 4th letters of the alphabet, hence 14, and 1972 is the year he was born—simple, huh?)

With his scrawny voice, Dupri isn't much of a rapper. But he's smart enough to realize it and leave the heavy lifting (and rhyming) to the all-stars, who turn the album into a veritable museum exhibit of R&B vocalizing in the '90s. There's gruff and garrulous gangsta rapping (Eightball, Too Short, and others in "Jazzy Hoes"), old-school rhymes (Slick Rick,

who boasts, "Charisma now felt/To the point that I can even make lesbians melt" in "Fresh"), emotive lover-man balladry (Usher, who lends a moaning hook to "The Party Continues"), and ultra-polished pop-rap (Krayzie Bones of Bone Thugs, on "Don't Hate on Me"). The multitude of guests is often a plus: The weakest moments, like some of Dupri's own solo spots, are over before you know it.

Alas, being known as a grade-A networker and producer isn't enough for Dupri. He wants a larger-than-life star persona. Toward that end, he refers to himself throughout *Life in 1472* as "Don Chi-Chi" ("a glamorous, fly-ass playboy") and

riddles the songs with lines about parties, platinum records, bullets, and money. This can be amusing: For instance, *Life in 1472* may be the first hip-hop album to give props to a country act ("Just thinkin' about gettin' paper, like Garth Brooks," from "The Party Continues"). But it also leads to a numbing barrage of references to bitches, ho's, and such. Some are tiresome ("Bag these bitches like groceries"). Some are proudly, defiantly offensive. "Going Home With Me" lays down these disturbing rules: "Don't even think about lyin', baby, or tryin', baby, to set me up for rape/'Cause it's all on tape." It's doubtful James

Brown ever thought a man's, man's, man's world could be so repugnant. Even Carey contributes, perhaps unwittingly, to this scenario. On the mild electro-funk of "Sweetheart," she turns herself into a subservient Barbie, cooing about her need for a "storybook romance."

If the best moments on *Life in 1472* are a musical high, Dupri's superstar ambitions, born out in the lyrics, become a buzz kill. By album's end, the effect is cynical and lazy, as if Dupri took the easy, gangsta way of establishing his own career instead of aiming for something more adventurous. Even in pop, it seems, synergy has its downside. **B-**

## HEAR AND NOW

This week on the music beat

■ **THESE GUNS FOR HIRE** Guns N' Roses may soon be shooting more than blanks. Singer Axl Rose, the sole remaining original Gunner, has at last put together a semi-stable lineup for the long-dormant group, which now includes former Replacements bassist Tommy Stinson, Vandals drummer Josh Freese, and ex-Nine Inch Nails guitarist Robin Finck. A source close to Rose says the new material the quartet is working up is indeed "techno influenced"—hard as that may be to believe with die-hard punkers Stinson and Freese on board—but still "sounds like Guns N' Roses." No word yet on when we can actually expect a new GN'R album, but, says the source, Axl and the boys (who are currently rehearsing in Woodland Hills, Calif.) will be entering the studio to begin laying down tracks "imminently." —Tom Sinclair

■ **TRICKS OF THE TRADEMARK** Looking for a band name? Well, if you think it might be funny to reference some oddball relic like, say, REO Speedwagon, think again. As punk-rockers REO Speedealer and Furious George recently found out, not all trademark holders are amused by such friendly tweaking. Speedealer, an obscure punk band from Texas, were recently forced to drop

the REO from their moniker after lawyers for the 'Wagon threatened legal action, while Furious George, an obscure punk band from New York, are facing a legal challenge from Houghton-Mifflin, the company that publishes the Curious George children's books. (Furious are fighting Curious to keep their name.) Says Furious' George

Tabb: "They're claiming that we might confuse little kids, that they'll think it's a live Curious George show instead of Furious George. Like kids are going to go out at midnight to a punk-rock club. And obviously the letter F is different from the letter C. They want to take the letter F? Well, uck them." Not that band names aren't sometimes genuinely confusing. A wise judge recently ruled that punkabilly band the Amazing Royal Crowns had to change their name because it too closely resembled that of swingers the Royal Crown Revue. Good thing: Telling the two outfits apart was, well, a royal pain. —Rob Brunner

HI, TECHNO Welcome to the "jungle"



RY COODER'S CLUB PARADISE

## HAVANA TRUMP

**R**Y COODER played guitar with the Stones and he also rediscovered Woody Guthrie's music years before Billy Bragg and Wilco (the dust bowl folkie's newest popularizers) had even reached puberty. But little in the long career of the ever-eclectic Cooder has generated as much excitement in the press and among fans as his latest musical reclamation project: Buena Vista Social Club, an ensemble of nearly two dozen virtuosic Cuban performers who range in age from 15 to 91.

Two years ago, Cooder, now 51, headed to Havana to record an album of Latin classics written prior to the 1959 Communist revolution. He found that many of the island's best musicians of that period were deceased, in poor health, or retired. Rubén González, 79, whom Cooder calls "the greatest piano soloist I have ever heard," suffered from arthritis and had quit playing; vocalist Ibrahim Ferrer, 71, was shining shoes for a living.

"These were world-famous Cuban stars from the '40s and '50s, and they had been forgotten even in their own country," says Buena Vista band member Juan de Marcos González. Adds Cooder: "There's a Latin expression—

'Nothing rarer than a green dog.' Well, that's what these musicians are, green dogs: They are the last living masters of their style of music."

The U.S.-Cuban collaboration (Cooder joined in on guitar and his son, Joachim, 19, played drums) resulted in the album *Buena Vista Social Club* (World Circuit/Nonesuch). Recorded in Havana and released last September, the disc has turned into a surprise hit, winning a Grammy and selling more than 750,000 copies worldwide. To celebrate their success, 22 members of Buena Vista Social Club assembled at Manhattan's Carnegie Hall on July 1 for a one-time-only North American concert that sold out in three days and drew such celebs as Mike Nichols and Jim Jarmusch.

While prohibitive costs make an American tour impossible, fans should be able to catch the act this fall, thanks to a documentary being produced by German director Wim Wenders (*Wings of Desire*). Wenders, who worked with Cooder on the soundtrack to his *Paris, Texas* (1984), has filmed more than 80 hours of the group in Havana, Amsterdam, and New York. "I saw people in my crew dance whom I've never seen dance before," says Wenders, 52. "They're stiff, they're Germans—but the music is so alive and spontaneous it completely took them over." —Mark Bartz

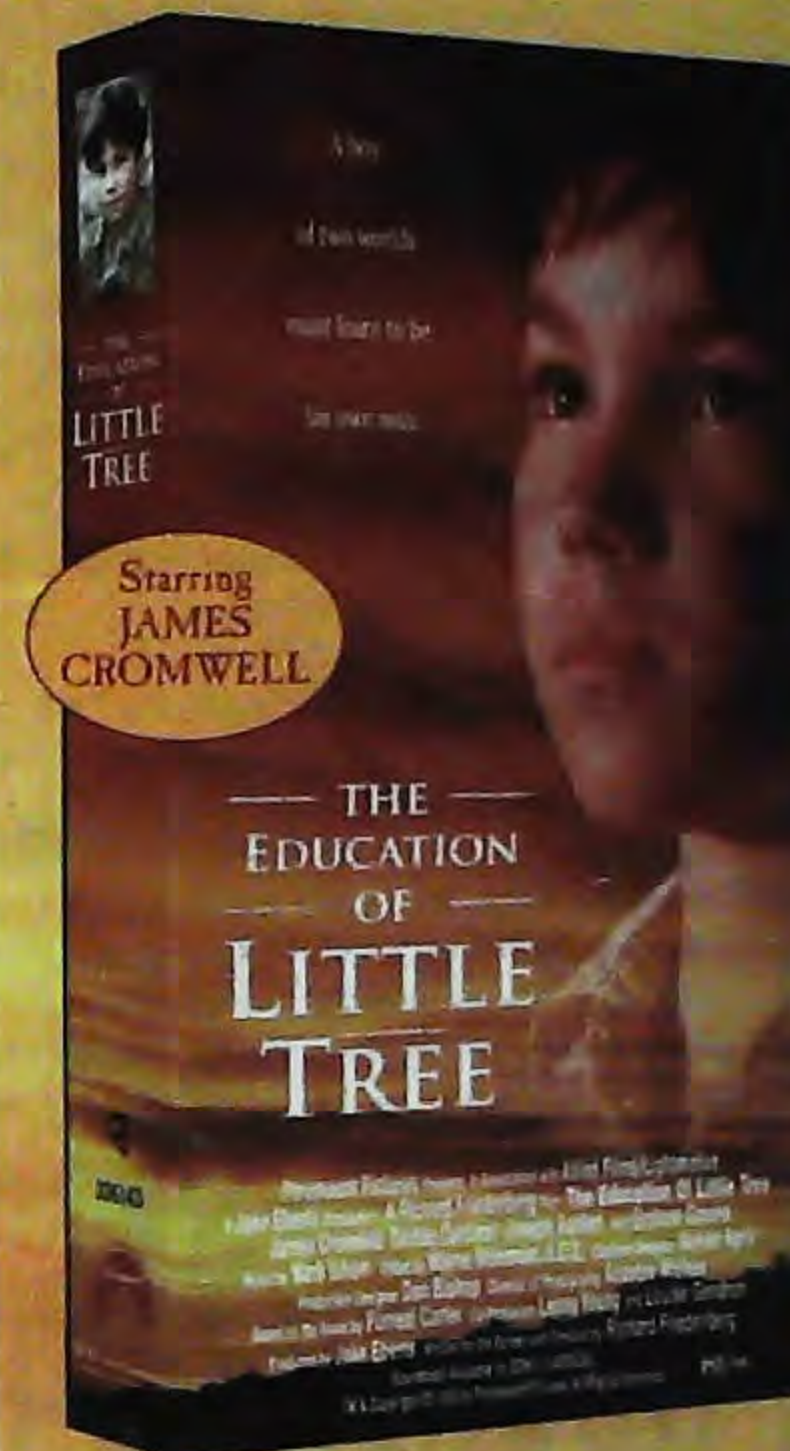
**SOCIAL DIRECTOR** Cooder (standing, fifth from right) with his pack of "green dogs"



PHOTOGRAPH BY DANNY CLINCH

## "Little Tree Will Steal Your Heart!"

—Jim Ferguson, PREVUE CHANNEL



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# The Week

## Singles

**MISTER JONES "Destiny" (A&M)** An amiable no-brainer powered by the lazy drag of a slide guitar, some declamatory power chords, and a little turntable scratching thrown in for good measure, "Destiny" should land this New York band onto a few hundred radio playlists; chances are, they'll vanish just as quickly. But isn't that really the whole point of midsummer pop trifles? **B** —Marc Weingarten

**TATYANA ALI "DAYDREAMIN'" (MJJ Music/Work)** In an age of sultry R&B video vixens, Ali's mix of new jill swing and a nostalgically innocent girl-group vibe feels initially refreshing. That's her only innovation, however: "Daydreamin'" lifts the same sample of Steely Dan's "Black Cow" that powers Lord Tariq and Peter Gunz' recent rap hit "Deja Vu (Uptown Baby)." Tariq and Gunz cameo as well, making "Daydreamin'" sound like a retreat even before it gets out of the box. **C+** —Matt Diehl

## Pop/Rock

**DRAIN S.T.H. Horror Wrestling (Mercury)** If you love ABBA, Roxette, and Ace of Base, you'll hate Sweden's latest import. Guitars jacked to 11, this all-grrrl metal band stomps through its debut with the torque of a cement mixer and the joie de vivre of a death-row inmate. (Sample lyric: "I am rotting from inside/From the things I have denied.") No denying, the hauntingly sludgy music borrows generously from Alice in Chains, but it's brutal enough to lift Drain above novelty. **B-** —Dan Snierson

**MARC RIBOT Y Los Cubanitos Postizos (Atlantic)** An avant-guitar star's take on Cuban music could come off as pointless dilettantism. But this low-key tribute to the late composer Arsenio Rodríguez—helmed by onetime Tom Waits sideman Ribot—downplays virtuoso soloing in favor of intricate rhythms and delicate instrumentation. Still, Ribot's stab at Cuban tunes doesn't approach the effort-



MARY'S LITTLE LAMB Ben Lee adds almost nothing to *Something*

less elegance of last year's wonderful *Buena Vista Social Club* album. **B** —Rob Brunner

**MARY J. BLIGE The Tour (MCA)** On this document of her recent tour, the queen of hip-hop soul truly

struts her stuff. Blige jazzily medleys her hits like "Real Love" with ace covers of such R&B classics as Aretha Franklin's "Daydreaming," blending motifs into each other like an expert DJ. The busy arrangements threaten to overwhelm, but

THE 'TIME' IS RIGHT FOR MUSIC VETS SEMISONIC

## HOOKED ON THEIR 'FEELING'

**T**HANKS TO their chart-topping hit—the seductive lookin'-for-love-at-last-call anthem "Closing Time"—Minneapolis trio Semisonic has become such a pop sensation that lead singer-songwriter Dan Wilson is getting the heartthrob treatment: The handsome 32-year-old recently modeled designer shirts on MTV's *House of Style* and says he's getting used to teenage girls scoping him out in airports.

"I don't know about this heartthrob thing," admits Wilson, a soft-spoken former Harvard art student who's married with a 15-month-old daughter. "But I wanted our new album [*Feeling Strangely Fine*/MCA] to have some songs that are straightforwardly about romance, love, and sex. There are already enough bands busy parading their damaged

and tattered psyches."

Speaking of love songs, these guys are hardly industry virgins. Semisonic's members have been touring and recording for more than a decade. Wilson and bassist John Munson (both part of cult



HEALTHY HEARTS Slichter, Wilson, and Munson

favorite Trip Shakespeare until '93) recruited drummer Jacob Slichter, and in 1996, the trio's major-label debut, *Great Divide*, was released to critical praise. But the album sold just 60,000 copies. The omnipresence of "Closing Time" has helped *Feeling* top the 340,000 mark. "To show they're not hopeless, fawning followers when they talk to me, some fans feel they have to insult the single by calling it a sellout," says a bemused Wilson. "They assume I'm sick of 'Closing Time' just because it's a hit." (He's not.)

Next up: the release of a second single—the decidedly more rockish but equally hooky "Singing in My Sleep"—and non-stop touring, including arena dates with matchbox 20 and fellow Twin Cities popsters Soul Asylum. Says Wilson of life on the road: "It's hard for me to write songs when we're traveling. I'm not like Matthew Sweet—one of those guys who's written a song every three days for years and half of them are amazingly good. Writing turns me into a crazy, weird person, and I'm glad to be taking a break from that." —MB



SQUARES OF THE WEEK

## Garth Brooks & Whitney Houston

Talk about friends in low places: The country and R&B megastars will join the illustrious ranks of box dwellers like Paul Lynde and Shadroe Stevens when they guest-star in a new *Hollywood Squares* this fall.

her raw voice pumps out so much emotion it makes the glitz seem insignificant. **B+** —MD

**EAGLE-EYE CHERRY Desireless (Work)** Son of avant-jazz trumpeter Don, brother of funk innovator Neneh, and almost as well-named as Moon Unit Zappa, this latest kin-rocker plays against lineage with a sound that's part Hootie bar ballad, part Ben Harper soul-folk. His oddly pinched vocals are seductive; so are the blues lines in his pop melodies. It's all nice enough, and already platinum in his native Sweden. But a tad more of the family radicalism would help. **B** —Will Hermes

**VANESSA-MAE Storm (Virgin)** The second "pop" album from the British-Chinese violin prodigy/pinup babe should dominate the classical crossover charts on the strength of its banality alone. V-M's compositions (written with producer-partner Andy Hill) are pleasant enough to shop by, but such schlock as "(I Can, Can (You?)," which adds a disco beat and aural groans to Offenbach's "Can-Can," is the worst variant on a bad idea since Walter Murphy's "A Fifth of Beethoven." Nothing wrong with stirring up the purists, but Vanessa-Mae is wasting her craft on Kraft. **D+** —Ty Burr

## Soundtracks

**VARIOUS ARTISTS Smoke Signals: Music From the Miramax Motion Picture (TVT Soundtrax)** The acclaimed indie film benefits from the subtle drama of B.C. Smith's seamlessly eclectic score, which blends orchestral flourishes, acoustic textures, and Native American chants to absorbingly atmospheric effect. But bland tunes by folkies Dar Williams and Jim Boyd break the mood, leaving one wishing that more of Smith's work would have made the cut. **C+** —Scott Schinder

**VARIOUS ARTISTS There's Something About Mary (Capitol)** This soundtrack to the Farrelly brothers' new romantic comedy showcases mostly sensitive but indistinctive modern-rock jangle from Ben Lee, Lemonheads, and Ivy. Of Jonathan Richman's three heartbreak tracks, his bleak "Let Her Go Into Darkness" alone conveys that love really hurts. And the Dandy Warhols are the only '90s guys here who manage half the energy of timeless classics by the Foundations ("Build Me Up Buttercup") and Joe Jackson ("Is She Really Going Out With Him"). **B-** —Chuck Eddy

## Reissues

**CHARLIE FEATHERS Get With It: Essential Recordings (1954-69) (Rev-ent)** There are those who claim that rockabilly pioneer Feathers was as riveting and inventive a performer as his Sun label mates Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis. It's hard to argue with the evidence presented on this exhaustively annotated two-CD set. The classic sides and revelatory rarities spotlight Feathers' uncanny rhythmic gift, brilliantly twisted lyrical persona, and keening, razor-sharp whine, making a persuasive case for his unjustly obscure genius. **A** —SS

## Country

**BR5-49 Big Backyard Beat Show (Arista Nashville)** On their second studio album, Nashville's favorite hep-cat retro band dilute their trademark rockabilly with an array of different styles—from a too-precious waltz ("Storybook Endings") to a Louis Jordan-like jump tune ("Out of Habit"). Still, "18 Wheels and a Crowbar" is a great Johnny Cash-on-swamp-acid trucker's song, and the overall level of creative musicianship oughta curl the toes of guitar strummers everywhere. **B** —Alanna Nash

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## THE CHARTS

## 'HELLO' HIGH WATER

**Y**OU'VE GOTTA fight...for your right...to even get into the stores where the Beastie Boys' *Hello Nasty* is on sale. At least, you'd imagine riots going on around the racks, judging from *Nasty*'s extraordinarily nice first-week sales figure of 681,000. For those keeping score at home, that's by far the best opening-week tally yet for a 1998 release. (It's not the year's best single-week figure overall, though, with '97 holdovers *Titanic* and Garth Brooks' *Sevens* scoring bigger one-week totals.) The top 10 had two other newcomers: In third place, it was hello Noreaga, and Monica claimed No. 8 as her own, three positions behind duet partner Brandy. But will they amend their long-running No. 1 single to "The Beastie Boy Is Mine"?



## POP ALBUMS

LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHART	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
—	—	BEASTIE BOYS <i>Hello Nasty</i> , Grand Royal/Capitol	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	1	SOUNDTRACK <i>Armageddon</i> , Columbia/Sony Music Soundtrax	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	136	NOREAGA <i>N.O.R.E.</i> , Penalty/Tommy Boy	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	5	SOUNDTRACK <i>City of Angels</i> , Warner Sunset/Reprise	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	4	BRANDY <i>Never S-A-Y Never</i> , Atlantic	16	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	3	BARENAKED LADIES <i>Stunt</i> , Reprise	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	10	SOUNDTRACK <i>Dr. Dolittle</i> , Blackground/Atlantic	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	—	MONICA <i>The Boy Is Mine</i> , Arista	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	11	BACKSTREET BOYS <i>Backstreet Boys</i> , Jive	43	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	8	WILL SMITH <i>Big Willie Style</i> , Columbia	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

## COUNTRY ALBUMS

1	1	SOUNDTRACK <i>Hope Floats</i> , Capitol	9
2	2	SHANIA TWAIN <i>Come On Over</i> , Mercury	37
3	—	TRISHA YEARWOOD <i>Where Your Road Leads</i> , MCA Nashville	1
4	4	LEANN RIMES <i>Sittin' on Top of the World</i> , Curb	11
5	3	GARTH BROOKS <i>The Limited Series</i> , Capitol	11
6	5	FAITH HILL <i>Faith</i> , Warner Bros.	13
7	6	BROOKS & DUNN <i>If You See Her</i> , Arista Nashville	7
8	—	COLLIN RAYE <i>The Walls Come Down</i> , Epic	1
9	8	DIXIE CHICKS <i>Wide Open Spaces</i> , Monument	25
10	7	REBA MCKENTIRE <i>If You See Him</i> , MCA Nashville	7

## CONCERTS

# OF SHOWS	TICKET SALES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3	\$1,600,000	FESTIVAL PRESIDENTE DE MUSICA LATINA Santo Domingo	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	\$1,131,319	LILITH FAIR Mountain View, Calif.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$655,649	METALLICA Atlanta	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$621,280	FURTHUR FESTIVAL Camden, N.J.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$573,632	METALLICA Bristow, Va.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$566,880	FURTHUR FESTIVAL East Rutherford, N.J.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$546,781	YANNI Montreal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$545,291	MICHEL SARDOU Montreal	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$543,180	FURTHUR FESTIVAL Bristow, Va.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
1	\$541,233	SPICE GIRLS Philadelphia	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

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# Mod Squad

Just in time for its '90s movie remake, *The Avengers*, starring two of the '60s' kickiest spies, hits tape. by Michael Sauter

SHOWBIZ HARDLY needed another secret agent. At the movies, Sean Connery's 007 had *Thunderball* rolling and Dean Martin's Matt Helm was saving the world in *The Silencers*. On TV, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and *Get Smart* were top 20 hits and Bill Cosby had broken the covert operatives' color barrier with *I Spy*. Then along came **The Avengers**, arriving on ABC from England in March 1966. Right away, even uncouth Americans could see this wasn't just another secret-agent show.

Campy and kinky, splashy yet sly, *The Avengers* had started out some five years earlier as conventional cloak and dagger. But by 1965, when "talented amateur"

Emma Peel (Diana Rigg) joined "top professional" John Steed (Patrick Macnee) on the Empire-saving beat, the show had evolved into a cheeky lark. Dispensing with foreign intrigues and nuclear threats in favor of pitting its dynamic duo against cartoony villains—mad scientists, murderous robots, sinister secret societies—the *Avengers* that America first saw found a way to spoof spies, British stuffiness, and '60s hip all at once.

Now making its U.S. video debut with 12 remastered

episodes from the 1967 season, its first in color, *The Avengers* reached its satiric height just as the swinging '60s were kicking into high gear. The same ferment that inspired the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and the summer of love found a more playful outlet in an action heroine who wore ultramod fashions, winking plots about killer kitties ("Pussies galore," purrs Mrs. Peel, surrounded by felines programmed to attack), psychedelic interiors, and what we now might call a Monty

Pythonish irreverence for anything too jolly, old, or English. Sometimes the series kidded other TV shows, as in the *Batmanesque* "POW! SPLAT!" finale of "The Winged Avenger." Sometimes it made fun of itself,

most memorably in "Epic," which ends with Mrs. Peel taking a shortcut back to her apartment by kicking down the wall to the adjacent set. That was *The Avengers'* way: Its grandest flourishes were also throwaway jokes.

For all its stylish invention, *The Avengers* might never have made it to video—or inspired the big-screen version that debuts Aug. 14—without two vivid protagonists who kept it all almost real. Rigg's Mrs. Peel

## The Original Avengers '67

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RIGG-A-DING DING Slinky Diana brought *The Avengers* to its apex

wasn't just a blithely witty beauty in eye-popping cat-suits. She painted, sculpted, did scientific research, wrote articles about bridge, and routinely out-clobbered all comers. And by the Rigg years, Macnee's dapper, jaunty, cheerfully ironic Steed had evolved into a

perfect parody of a perfect gentleman, a spy who preferred to dispatch villains with his reinforced bowler, his gadget-packed umbrella, or other available props—such as the handy mirror he uses to deflect a lethal laser in "From Venus With Love." Together, Macnee and

Rigg were an effervescent team, breezily matching bons mots, taking turns rescuing each other (for such a tough customer, Mrs. Peel spent an unaccountable amount of time in bondage), and, mission accomplished, retiring to his flat or hers to sip champagne, trade quips, and leave

the rest to our imaginations. Long before Mulder and Scully weren't kissing, Steed and Mrs. Peel kept us wondering. But with them it wasn't "Will they or won't they?" It was "Do they or don't they?" This '60s survivor would like to think they did. **A**

A TIP OF THE HAT TO AVENGER PATRICK MACNEE

## IT WAS HIS HAPPENING, BABY!



**STICK SHIFT** The bumbershoot has been replaced by a cane, but Macnee still dresses the part; (right) with first gal pal Blackman, and a weapon oft-disdained

**W**HEN PATRICK MACNEE first talked to the American press about the must-see British TV hit that had made him and Diana Rigg stars back home, "I'd explain that it was about a man in a bowler hat and a woman who threw men over her shoulder. They'd look at us as if we were mad."

Three decades later, man-tossing women aren't so uncommon, but *The Avengers'* John Steed remains the haberdasher's superspy exception. Macnee is still proud of the character he trans-

formed "as I went along" from the trench-coated cliché of the show's early years to the dapper gent who didn't carry a gun. "He didn't need one," explains Macnee, 76. "He relied on his wits. I fought in World War II—I saw friends blown to bits. When you've seen that, you feel very differently about guns."

Macnee is flattered that Ralph Fiennes is re-creating Steed—with bowler, sans gun—in the August film adaptation, in which he has a cameo. But he sympathetically avers that Uma Thurman will have a

tough time topping the first Mrs. Peel.

"Di Rigg was unique. We used to rewrite whole scenes over lunch hour. I say we? She rewrote them. I was her stenographer. We were extraordinarily in synch right from the start."

The rapport, he says, was strictly platonic, as it was with his other fetching *Avengers* costars, Honor Blackman, Linda Thorson, and Joanna Lumley. That brings a chuckle from Thorson. "He always says that he never fancied any of us," she says. "I think he fancied us all."

"I did fancy them," Macnee admits. "But I didn't do anything with them. I went out of my way not to. Once you go to bed with a costar, it's over."

Post-*Avengers*, Macnee divided his time between theater (*Sleuth* on Broadway), film (*The Howling*, *A View to a Kill*), and many TV guest spots.

Recently, the actor, who lives in Rancho Mirage, Calif., with wife Baba, has been the host of The Sci-Fi Channel's *Mysteries*, *Magic & Miracles*, penned a memoir, *The Avengers and Me*, and kept busy narrating audio books: "I've done nine Jack Higgins novels."

But to most people he'll always be Steed, which doesn't bother Macnee a bit. When he enters a room,

impeccably tailored, carrying a cane (for his arthritis) instead of an umbrella, he may not be recognized—until he speaks. "Even when people don't recognize me, they recognize my voice. I have a loud one. On the street, on an airplane, they'll suddenly turn and say, 'Steed!' I've gotten to know more people that way." —MS





# The Week

## Recent Movies

**THE GINGERBREAD MAN** Kenneth Branagh, Embeth Davidtz, Robert Downey Jr., Robert Duvall (1998, PolyGram, R, \$101.99) Robert Altman, master of the rambling satiric panorama, was hardly the most obvious choice to direct a story from the mind of John Grisham, master of the ham-fisted thriller. But *The Gingerbread Man*, Altman's rendition of an unproduced Grisham script, actually seems more like *The Player* than *The Firm*, and it weaves almost as compelling a spell. Once again, an arrogant go-getter is humbled, this time a slippery defense attorney (Branagh) who stumbles into

an intrigue that he can't wriggle out of with his usual glib finesse. Altman brings out the suspense through his talent for quirky tension between characters, which allows this movie to play especially well on video. **B+** —David Everett

**HARD RAIN** Christian Slater, Morgan Freeman, Minnie Driver (1998, Paramount, R, \$101.99) Take *Broken Arrow* and add water. And lo-cal artificial predicaments. Instead of tangling with weapons hijackers in the desert as he did in *Arrow*, Slater now tangles with armored-car robbers in a flooded town. Why an armored car is transporting millions of dollars during a flood of Old Testament

proportions is not exactly clear. But then nothing else makes much sense either, including an innocuous character who, halfway through the movie, suddenly transforms into a diabolical villain for no discernible reason. *Armageddon*'s vacuity may represent a new low to some critics, but in its thoroughgoing fatuousness, this tape offers another instructive example of exactly what stinks about modern action movies. **D+** —DE

**DARK CITY** Rufus Sewell, William Hurt, Jennifer Connelly (1998, New Line, R, \$103.99) A visually sumptuous, thematically fertile melding of every urban paranoid vision from *The Trial* to *Metropolis* to *Brazil*, *City* ultimately plays like one of those art-deco dystopian CD-ROM adventures of recent years: Amnesiac man (Sewell) wakes up in mysterious big-city hotel room and must figure out where he is, who he is, and what the vast conspiracy is all about (you know, *that* vast conspiracy). As written and directed by *The Crow*'s Alex Proyas, it's a little short on coherence and long on comic-book sensationalism—dig the hokey, climactic Battle of the Minds between the hero and a cadaverous Mr. Big—but there's no denying the nightmarish pull of the film's aesthetic. Like his soulless alien villains, Proyas creates an entire world—and traps us there. **B** —Ty Burr

**LIVE FLESH** Javier Bardem, Francesca Neri, Liberto Rabal (1997, Orion, R, \$99.98, subtitled) Fans of Pedro Almodóvar's more farcical and energetic '80s films—*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, *Matador*—may be surprised by the stateliness of this adaptation. Eschewing the dynamism of his early work, our man in Madrid lends a pleasing elegance to novelist Ruth Rendell's so-richly-melodramatic-it's-unsummarizable tale of disparate lives intersecting on a fateful evening in 1990. The slightly detached result feels a bit like calisthenics—an exercise in killing time until Almodóvar's muse starts whispering again—but his are muscles we definitely don't want to see atrophy. **B** —Mike D'Angelo

**DEAD HEART** Bryan Brown, Ernie Dingo (1997, Fox Lorber, unrated, \$89.98) If thoughtfulness and good intentions were all that mattered, this Australian drama about rising tensions between settlers and aborigines in a remote outback town would be a minor masterpiece. But it also helps if a movie has a pulse, and first-time director Nick Parsons' didactic approach gives his



WINNER OF THE WEEK

## 'Men in Black'

One pair of guys in dark suits displaced another as *MIB* surpassed *Pulp Fiction* as the best-renting title of the past five years.

film's title unintended resonance. Mesmerizingly arid locations and solid work by Brown as a flinty, unethical constable can't compensate for the emotional vacuum at the narrative's core. **C-** —MD'A

## Kids' Movie

**LITTLE MEN** Mariel Hemingway, Chris Sarandon, Ben Cook, Michael Caloz (1998, Warner, PG, \$19.98) As good-hearted as a Beanie Baby, this dramatization of the Louisa May Alcott novel, in which *Little Women*'s Jo (Hemingway) has grown up to be headmistress of the progressive Plumfield School, isn't too cuddly to catch the imaginations of kids 9 and younger. The troubled boys in Jo's charge include Dan, a pint-size rebel with a give-me-a-break grin, and orphan Nat (Caloz), whose friendship with the ungovernable, pyromaniacal Dan teaches him about truth, honor, and love. **B+** —Denise Lanciot

## Vintage TV

**THE VERY BEST OF ST. ELSEWHERE** Denzel Washington, Mark Harmon, Howie Mandel, William Daniels, Ed Flanders, Christina Pickles, Ed Begley Jr. (1998, New Video, unrated, \$59.95, four-tape set) Watching episodes of a show you loved years ago is like looking through a school yearbook: You smile at the goofy haircuts, recall favorite moments, and sigh with relief that life goes on. That's the case with the acclaimed *St. Elsewhere*. It's heartwarming to revisit the run-down Boston hospital via these eight "very best" shows from the series'



DUNKIN' DOUGH NUTS Slater and Driver keep chins up in the unsteady *Rain*

six seasons (1982–88), to see the neurotic, lovable staff again, and watch such memorable guest stars as Laraine Newman (as a woman who thinks she's a bird), Paul Sand (as a kindly shrink), Michael Richards (as an intrusive documentarian), and Tim Robbins (as a baby-faced terrorist). But creators Joshua Brand and John Falsey, who went on to mastermind *Northern Exposure*, may have trained us too well to expect the unexpected. At 10 years' remove, the goings-on at St. Eligius seem tinny, constrained, and surprisingly formulaic. **B** —Caren Weiner

## Documentary

**ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK: THE KING OF ROMANCE** (1998, PDC Video, unrated, \$19.95) That smooth three-octave range...that tall, dark, handsome body...those sideburns! If ever a swingin' music man was due a pop revival, it's oft-maligned "contemporary singer" Engelbert Humperdinck, who's wowed fans worldwide for three decades. But this somnolent 48-minute tour through his life and career lacks heat. The recent performance clips don't capture his live shows' extravagance, the personal interviews only tease viewers with his wit, and the otherwise thorough history of Arnold George Dorsey—born in India, raised in England, and first influenced by Nat "King" Cole—never explains: Why "Engelbert Humperdinck"? *The King of Romance* won't have anyone throwing knickers at the screen. **C** —Erin Richter

## DVD

**THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS** Jodie Foster, Anthony Hopkins (1991, Criterion, R, \$39.95) Director Jonathan Demme's Oscar-winning

thriller remains haunting, though less in the lurid details of tracking a serial killer than in the emotional journey of FBI trainee Clarice Starling (Foster) as she gets to know Hannibal Lecter (Hopkins). Criterion's typically impressive packaging contains everything: deleted scenes (most interesting is a televangelist's rant), storyboards, revealing audio commentary from all the principals, and an FBI case study of one serial killer. Then there's "Voices of Death," a tabloid name for a chilling collection of quotes from Ted Bundy, Charles Starkweather, and other notorious killers. The details of their childhoods and crimes forcefully remind you that this surreal tale is based on evil that's all too real. **A** —Michael Giltz

## Also Released

With tons of photos and archival footage intercut with fawning testimonials from the likes of Bowie, Byrne, and Patti Smith, **LOU REED: ROCK AND ROLL HEART** (1998, WinStar, unrated, \$19.98) offers a full accounting of the last 30-odd years of this rockasaurus rex... Imagine an era when cream pies were projectiles and everyone seemed to walk faster and you have **SLAPSTICK ENCYCLOPEDIA VOLUMES 5–8** (1998, Kino, unrated, \$24.95 each), the final installment in this anthology series of silent films "From the Golden Age of Comedy"... Drink plenty of fluids before bawling through **RED CHERRY** (1995, Fox Lorber, unrated, \$89.98, subtitled), the brutal and true WWII tale of Chuchu, a Chinese orphan girl, and the children of war from the Russian front. —Jon Chase

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## TOP VIDEOS

## 'PHANTOM' TOLL

IT'S THE LAST hope of movie execs: We'll make up for our low grosses on video! But that scenario doesn't seem likely for this week's two new rental titles, *Sphere* and *Phantoms*, which debut in just about the same slots they scored when they first appeared in theaters last winter. If box office is any barometer—and these days, it usually is—don't look for either title to rule the video charts. The deep-sea thriller *Sphere* lasted only four weeks before sinking below the top 20, and *Phantoms*, a lame Dean Koontz thriller that Ben Affleck can't save, dropped out in two weeks.



SINKABLE? Sharon Stone floats in *Sphere*, for the time being

## TAPE RENTALS

LAST WEEK			WEEKS ON CHART
1	1	GOOD WILL HUNTING Matt Damon, Miramax	2
2	—	SPHERE Dustin Hoffman, Warner	1
3	2	WAG THE DOG Dustin Hoffman, New Line	3
4	4	FALLEN Denzel Washington, Warner	5
5	5	AS GOOD AS IT GETS Jack Nicholson, Columbia TriStar	9
6	3	SCREAM 2 Neve Campbell, Dimension	6
7	7	AMISTAD Morgan Freeman, DreamWorks	3
8	8	THE POSTMAN Kevin Costner, Warner	4
9	—	PHANTOMS Ben Affleck, Dimension	1
10	6	THE REPLACEMENT KILLERS Chow Yun-Fat, Columbia TriStar	3

## TAPE SALES

1	—	THE SPIRIT OF MICKEY Animated, Walt Disney, \$22.99	1
2	1	SPICE WORLD The Spice Girls, Columbia TriStar, \$14.95	5
3	5	AUSTIN POWERS: INTERNATIONAL MAN OF MYSTERY Mike Myers, New Line, \$14.98	20
4	2	GREASE John Travolta, Paramount, \$19.95	4
5	13	1998 NBA FINALS Michael Jordan, Fox, \$19.98	2
6	3	SWINGERS Jon Favreau, Miramax, \$19.99	2
7	6	FACE/OFF Nicolas Cage, Paramount, \$14.95	8
8	4	CONTACT Jodie Foster, Warner, \$19.98	3
9	7	AS GOOD AS IT GETS Jack Nicholson, Columbia TriStar, \$22.99	9
10	12	SOUTH PARK: VOLUME I Animated, Warner, \$14.95	11

## DIRECT-TO-TAPE RENTALS

1	—	POSTMORTEM Charlie Sheen, Sterling	1
2	1	JOEY Ed Begley Jr., MGM	2
3	—	WATCHERS REBORN Mark Hamill, New Horizons	1
4	—	RETROACTIVE James Belushi, Orion	1
5	4	UNCLE SAM Robert Forster, A-Pix	2
6	5	THE PROPHECY II Christopher Walken, Dimension	25
7	3	MEAN GUNS Christopher Lambert, Trimark	2
8	2	THE RAGE Gary Busey, Dimension	2
9	7	ANGELS IN THE ENDZONE Christopher Lloyd, Walt Disney	8
10	9	BODY COUNT Ice-T, LIVE	17

SOURCE: VIDEO BUSINESS FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 10, 1998  
DIRECT-TO-TAPE RENTALS: VIDEO BUSINESS FOR THE WEEK ENDING JULY 12, 1998

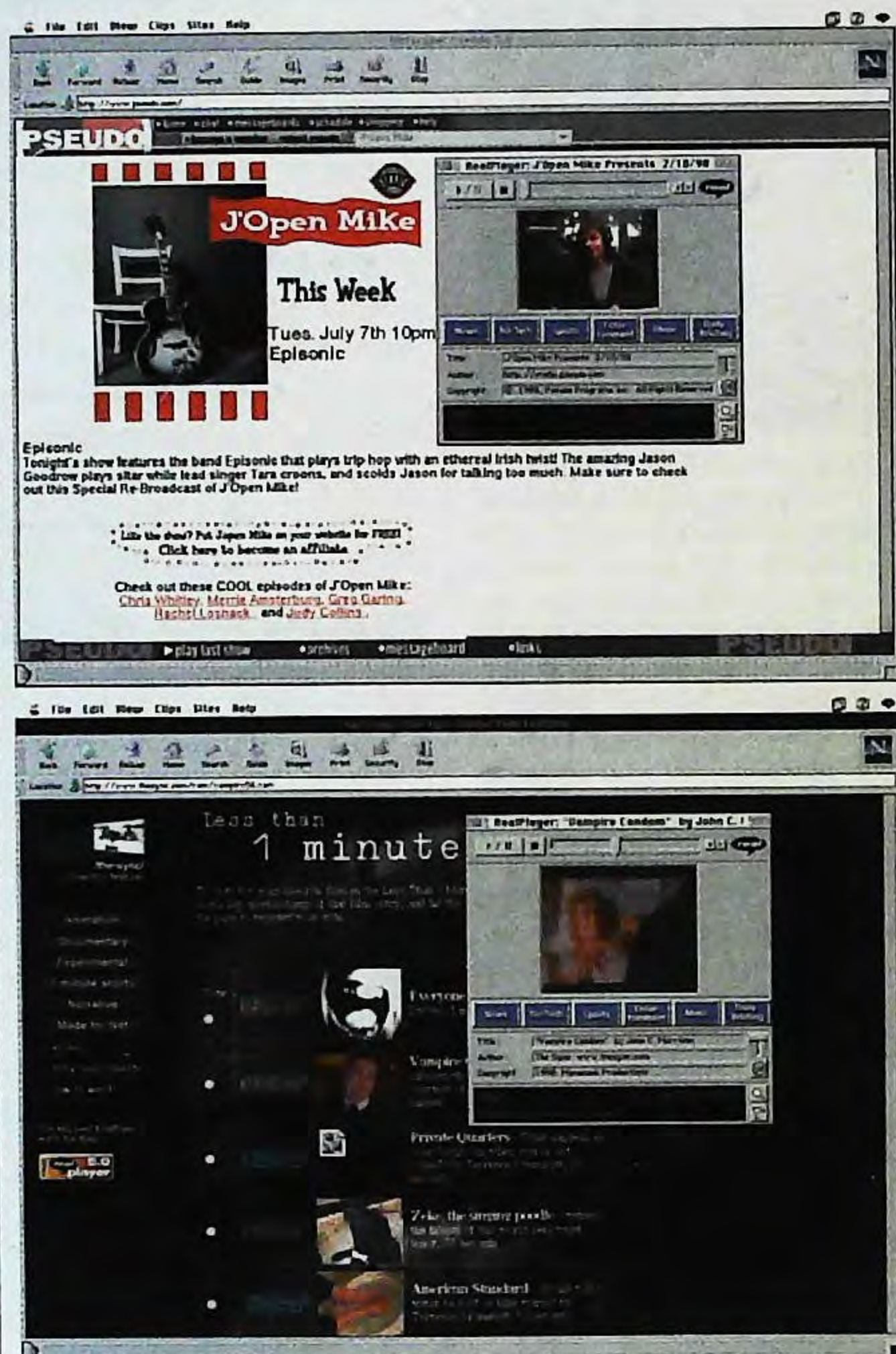


# The Studio Era

Like the MGMs of old, ambitious websites are creating entertainment that showcases the medium at its coolest. by David Kushner

IT WAS BOUND TO HAPPEN: The digerati are going showbiz. After seeing several pioneer websites (adaweb, TotalNY) unplug, ambitious E-preneurs are repackaging themselves as full-fledged production companies. They don't merely make sites, they make "shows": real-time, bells-and-whistles Net-only entertainment. They're not new media, they're *all* media, incorporating the best—and sometimes the worst—of TV, magazines, radio, computer games, and film. If the Web is ever capable of truly original content, here are some of the sites that may show us what it is:

■ **Pseudo Online Network** ([www.pseudo.com](http://www.pseudo.com)) Based in New York City, Pseudo is an alt.innovator in live, online happenings. Using RealPlayer software, Pseudo produces more than 40 weekly chat-radio shows that combine audio, video, talk, and text messaging. Boot up, say, "All Games Hardware" and hear expert gamers debate the splatter quotient of *Quake II* while you chat with other listeners or E-mail questions to the hosts. Pop-culture fetishists assemble shows that cover music ("88 Hip-Hop," "Reaction Reggae"), digital life ("Silicon Alley Reporter"), and—Howard Stern, take note—female wrestling ("And Justice for BRAWL"). Pseudo has the McLuhanesque vision; now it just needs the bandwidth to catch up. **A**



■ **RSUB** ([www.rsub.com](http://www.rsub.com)) The content wing of Razorfish Studios, a Silicon Alley ad company that has created sites for Pepsi and America Online, RSUB is (as the name implies) a subnetwork of regularly updated digital experiences created by neo-bohemian artists. The vibe of RSUB's "shows" is self-conscious late-'90s cool, from "Bunko" (kitschy

THAT'S SHOWBIZ It's "J'Open Mike" time on Pseudo, top; one-minute movies unspool at the Sync

Shockwave games such as "Club Seal"—"Beat defenseless animals to a techno beat!!") to "The Blue Dot" (art/prose installations like the unnerving taxi-dermy-on-the-loose saga "Rabbit Rat"). The works are edgy, but, considering the speed of the average surfer's connection, the combination of bit-sucking plug-ins and sprawling content is pretentious. You can't help but crash this party. **B**

>> Hotlink to The Web Guide at [www.ew.com](http://www.ew.com) <<

■ **Tripod** ([www.tripod.com](http://www.tripod.com)) Tripod is best known for its sprawling community, whose residents host and create their own websites, but it has also been cultivating Pods: self-contained online clubhouses that feature chat, essays, and digital art. These aren't shows as much as group projects, interweaving contributions by guest artists, writers, and Tripod locals. Topics cover *Real World*-style essentials, from job hunting to cheap eats to retro games (read a piece on the phenomenon, then boot up a spoof of the Atari 2600 classic *Yar's Revenge*). With nearly 2 million members, Tripod already has what other sites clamor for: an audience. Now it could use some live audio/video fun. **B+**

■ **The Sync** ([www.thesync.com](http://www.thesync.com)) A cross between a public-access cable channel and, it hopes, Sundance. One section, the Sync Online Film Festival, features documentaries, animation, and, for ultra-quick downloads, one-minute shorts. Sync fans vote for their favorites along the way; will it be the cyborg noir "Everyone Is a Robot" or the gothic safe sex of "Vampire Condom"? There are also do-it-yourself talk-video shows like "Cyber-Love," where four twenty-somethings meet the inventor of the world's first Virtual Sex Machine. And Jenni of the infamous Jenni-Cam hosts a behind-the-scenes look at her life as a Net celeb. Is that postmodern or what? Just don't expect polish: The Sync, like most of these sites—heck, like the Web itself—is necessarily scuffed. **A-**

## NEW This week

**WEBSITES//THE MASK OF ZORRO** ([www.sony.com/zorro](http://www.sony.com/zorro));  $\pi$  ([www.pithemovie.com](http://www.pithemovie.com)) If you want to see the current state of the art in movie-studio websites—arch and plug-in heavy—go to the *Zorro* site, where you'll find two mind-bogglingly rich 3-D virtual worlds (one exploratory, the other duel oriented) in addition to the usual PR puff. If, however, you prefer your flackery with meat, surf on over to the impressively maddening site for  $\pi$ , the Sundance sensation now in theatrical release. Created by Sean Gullette, who stars in the film as a mentally shaky mathematics whiz trying to divine the connections between  $\pi$ , the stock market, and the kabbalah, the  $\pi$  page comes on like a techno club for art dweebs, assaulting you with imagery, rhythms, and a truly strange assortment of links (everything from a chaos-theory primer to, appropriately, the National Headache Foundation). Both sites: **A** —Ty Burr

### 'LOSERS' OF THE WEEK

#### 'Mike' and 'Diane'

The two teens were scheduled to lose their virginity online at [www.ourfirst-time.com](http://www.ourfirst-time.com), until the stunt was revealed as just another Netscam. Given the predictable uproar, we'd swear it was the work of media hoax-meister Joey Skaggs—but he's disavowed all knowledge.

### THE WEB GENERATION SPEAKS

## Surveying the Scene

WHAT COULD LUKE SKYWALKER, MOTHER Teresa, and Howard Stern possibly have in common? They're all Heroes of Our Generation, according to a recent online survey of more than 16,000 Web surfers from the ages of 15 to 24 conducted by entertainment supersite **the den** (the Daily Entertainment Network at [www.theden.com](http://www.theden.com)). In fact, the so-called Web Generation chose Skywalker as its No. 1 hero, topping Jesus, Michael Jordan, Martin Luther King Jr., and even "our parents." "The survey uncovered news about this group that surprised us," says the den's Mary Firme. "The message [is] that this genera-

tion embodies the influence of the Web on their world."

Along with heroes, the poll also ranked villains (Saddam Hussein and Barney are Nos. 1 and 2, respectively), defining moments (the *Challenger* shuttle explosion was pivotal to the majority of respondents), and, naturally, the most popular brands of clothing and soda pop. The den says the WebGen poll has been such a success that it plans to do a similar study every year. With the release of next year's *Star Wars* prequel, maybe Obi-Wan Kenobi will duke it out with Luke for the top spot—and Mother Teresa can referee. —Kipp Cheng



### CYBERTALK

## SYMBOL CLASH

◀ "I don't see myself as a sex symbol.... Obviously, I'm aware of the issues I talk about, one of the main ones being women claiming their sexuality and spirituality. That's always my quest: How do you find that balance—kinda like 'How can I be a sacred being and a hot p---y?'... I see myself as a librarian in high heels, and I'm becoming more comfortable with that." —Singer TORI AMOS on E! Online

"[Boyfriend Matt Dillon] had to wear these fake teeth, which looked like the world's



worst cap job, and he'd kid around between scenes, like, 'Come here, baby. Give me a kiss.' I was like, 'Please just stay away from me.' But the weird thing is, even with the teeth and the mustache and the extra weight and the ugly clothes, I still found him incredibly sexy. I really had to work to pretend he was unsavory to me." —*There's Something About Mary's*

CAMERON DIAZ on E! Online

"The film is almost a year of your life's work, the studio trusted you with a lot of money, and the actors and crew are depending on it being good. It's your ego on the line, and you want it to be a success. I get out of town before a film opens, and I carry three pairs of pants with me." —*Lethal Weapon 4* director RICHARD DONNER on ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY ONLINE



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FALLEN IDOL Outside Monroe's Brentwood home, the omnipresent cameras shadowed her even in death

# Goodbye, Norma Jean

**ENCORE** Sex goddess Marilyn Monroe overdosed in 1962. by Douglas A. Mendini

**W**HEN SHE WENT TO BED, MARILYN Monroe would take her phone out into the hall, cover it with pillows, and close the door to sleep in the absolute solitude her celebrity prohibited by day. But at about 3:30 a.m. on Aug. 5, 1962, Eunice Murray, the housekeeper at Monroe's Brent-

wood, Calif., home, noticed that there was no phone outside her bedroom. Murray called Monroe's psychiatrist, Dr. Ralph Greenson, who ar-

rived shortly to find the actress naked on her bed, surrounded by pill bottles, clutching the phone. Greenson summoned Monroe's physi-

cian, Dr. Hyman Engelberg, who pronounced the 36-year-old sex queen dead—of an overdose of prescription drugs, an apparent suicide, the reasons uncertain.

If all actresses hit a career wall at a certain age, Monroe was approaching one of forbidding scale. After parlaying her lusty girlishness into a 30-movie career that defined "sex symbol" for the postwar era, she was entering middle age, though still gorgeous and a gifted comedian. Clearly despondent in her final months, she was fired from her last film, the George Cukor comedy *Something's Got to Give*, for missing more than a third of the film's 33 shooting days. Hollywood whispered that she was finished. Personally, too, Monroe seemed stalled, unattached after a decade with the power to grab the best

catches in the world—including Joe DiMaggio, playwright Arthur Miller (the last two of her three ex-husbands), and, allegedly, John F. Kennedy.

Though divorced from Monroe for seven years, DiMaggio organized her funeral, barring all but 35 of her friends from the ceremony. Today, Monroe's grave at Westwood Memorial Park is a pop-culture shrine, visited by some 3,000 fans annually. Yet it's just one among thousands of memorials in the form of books (Norman Mailer's *Marilyn: A Biography*), films (HBO's *Norma Jean and Marilyn*), songs (Elton John's original "Candle in the Wind"), articles, and licensed products (Marilyn merlot) that, cumulatively, have made the former Norma Jean Baker not only one of the great pop legends of the 20th century but an all-purpose intellectual metaphor and an international industry. ■



LASTING LOOK The final portrait

time capsule / Aug. 5, 1962

AT THE MOVIES, Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, starring James Mason as Humbert Humbert and Sue Lyon as Lolita (right), entices audiences to the box office. This August, another version, with Jeremy Irons, will run



on Showtime (see review on page 53) after more than a year of being hot-potatoed by skittish distributors. ON TV, Westerns round up the top three slots as *Wagon Train*, *Bonanza*, and *Gunsmoke* ride tall. The following season, the No. 1 spot will go to another kind of country

folk—*The Beverly Hillbillies*. AND IN THE NEWS, the Soviet Union tests a nuclear bomb in the atmosphere over the Arctic. The blast, estimated at 40 megatons, is the second-largest nuclear explosion ever—the largest being an in-air test the USSR conducted in 1961. —Joe Neumaier

R O B E S T E S

A pop singer

Her manager

An architect

A security guard

The sheriff's wife

A shop clerk

and a killer.

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